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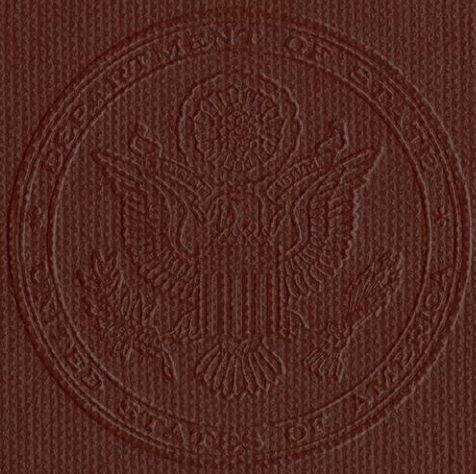
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–1960

Volume XVI

East Asia-Pacific Region; Cambodia; Laos

Editor in Chief John P. Glennon

Editors Edward C. Keefer

David W. Mabon

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Preface

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government. The series documents the formulation of policies including important alternative views which were not adopted.

The Historian of the Department of State is responsible for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The editing of the series in the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, is guided by principles of historical objectivity and accuracy. Documents are not altered or excised without indicating where changes have been made. Every effort is made to identify lacunae in the record and to explain why they have occurred. Certain omissions may be necessary to protect national security or to condense the record and avoid needless repetition. The published record, however, omits no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision, and nothing has been excluded for the purpose of concealing or glossing over a defect in policy.

At the time of the compilation of this volume in 1985 and 1986, the Department was guided in the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series by official regulations first promulgated by Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg on March 26, 1925. A new statutory charter for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series was established by Title IV of Public Law 102–138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993, which was signed by the President on October 28, 1991. That new charter requires that the *Foreign Relations* series "shall be a thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity." The new charter also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published "not more than 30 years after the events recorded."

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations of the United States Series

This volume is part of a subseries of volumes that documents the most important issues in the foreign policy of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration for the years 1958 through 1960. In plan-

ning the 1958–1960 triennium, the editors chose to present U.S. policy toward East Asia in five separate volumes. Volume I is devoted to U.S. relations with and policy toward Vietnam during the opening stages of the second Indochina war. Volume XVI presents the record of U.S. policy toward Cambodia and Laos as well as as an overview of U.S. regional policy for East Asia. Since the conflict in Vietnam greatly affected neighboring Cambodia and Laos, the contents of volume XVI are closely related to those in volume I. There is also a close relationship between volume XVI and the other East Asia volumes: XV, South and Southeast Asia (with compilations on Thailand and the Philippines); XVII, Japan and Indonesia; and XVIII, China and Korea.

A combined microfiche supplement for volumes XV and XVI contains unannotated compilations of key papers on U.S. relations with Burma and Singapore and Malaya, as well as supplementary documents on U.S. regional policy in East Asia and on Cambodia and Laos.

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The law requires that the published record contained in the *Foreign Relations* series must reflect all major foreign policy decisions and activities and include relevant documentation from all government agencies and entities involved in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support. The historical records of the Presidents and their national security advisers together with the still larger body of documentation in the Department of State are the principal sources for the *Foreign Relations* series. The National Archives and Records Administration, including the Presidential libraries that it administers, is the main repository and coordinating authority for historical government records and a major source for the documents and information included in the series. Specific sources used in preparing this volume are described in detail in the List of Sources, pages XIII–XVII.

Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, 1958–1960, Volume XVI

In selecting documents, the editors placed primary consideration on the formulation of U.S. policy in the Eisenhower administration and on the most significant U.S. diplomatic and military relationships with foreign governments. The formal institutional records of the National Security Council, both memoranda of discussion and the numbered papers, have been carefully examined and extensively included. The editors had complete access to memoranda of discussion at National Security Council (NSC) meetings and other institutional NSC documents included in the Whitman File at the Eisenhower Library, as well as more informal foreign policy materials in that file and in other

collections at the Eisenhower Library. These Presidential files were supplemented by copies of NSC and White House documents in Department of State files.

During the 1958–1960 period, the Department of State had the lead in the formulation and execution of policy. Secretaries John Foster Dulles and Christian A. Herter advised President Eisenhower, and they and their assistants took part in the deliberations of the National Security Council and its ancillary bodies. The Department was also foremost in exchanges of views and negotiations on policy matters with foreign governments. The editors had complete access to all Department of State files: the central decimal files; the special collections of the Executive Secretariat; the various specialized decentralized (lot) files originally maintained by Department policymakers at the bureau, office, and division level; and the embassy files of the pertinent Foreign Service posts.

The editors also had access to Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense maintained by the Washington National Records Center and to declassified JCS files at the National Archives. Copies of classified JCS materials were obtained from the Joint Staff on a request basis. National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates for this triennium were available from the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

One principal emphasis of the compilation on the East Asia-Pacific region is the formulation of major regional policies at the highest level of the U.S. Government, as documented by the discussions and the policy papers of the National Security Council. Another major emphasis is the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and the ANZUS Pact. The editors reconstructed a selective but representative record of each of the three annual meetings at the foreign minister level of SEATO and of the consultations, formal and informal, among the ANZUS foreign ministers. Other crucial components of the compilation include the activities of the SEATO Military Advisers and various proposals for a SEATO role in the resolution of the Laos crisis. A small selection of documents treats the evolution of U.S. economic policy in the region, with emphasis on the rejection of proposals for massive U.S. assistance in favor of the encouragement of regional economic and technical cooperation.

The microfiche supplement contains a larger selection of materials on economic topics such as the Colombo Plan, documents regarding views exchanged at special conferences of U.S. Chiefs of Mission in East Asian posts, and other materials supplementary to the topics outlined above.

Documents in the printed compilation on the East Asia-Pacific region are primarily of NSC, White House, and Department of State origin, with a small portion coming from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and

the Department of Defense. During the declassification review of the original manuscript for the compilation, deletions were made from the record of multilateral diplomacy in the print volume. The deletions, made principally for the purpose of protecting information received from and given to foreign governments in confidence, do not, in the opinion of the editors, substantially impair the comprehensiveness of the overview of U.S. foreign policy and national security deliberations presented in the documentation originally selected.

The focus for the Cambodia compilation is the friction between South Vietnam and Cambodia over border incidents and the attempt by the government of Ngo Dinh Diem to overthrow Cambodia's leader, Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The assessments and recommendations of the U.S. missions in Saigon, Bangkok, and Phnom Penh were especially important in documenting these tensions. The focus shifts partly back to Washington in 1958 when the Eisenhower administration debated the issue of reducing U.S. assistance to Cambodia as a penalty for closer relations with the Sino-Soviet bloc. The Eisenhower administration handled a 1960 Cambodian request for jet aircraft and jet training of pilots at the interagency level under the auspices of the NSC, placing the focus of policy again in Washington at the interagency level.

The ability of the United States to discover and then to discourage South Vietnamese subversion against Cambodia involved the U.S. intelligence community. The editors consulted documents originated by the Central Intelligence Agency that are in the Eisenhower Library and the Department of Defense. That research was accomplished with the full cooperation and assistance of the CIA.

While the editors are satisfied that the broad outline of the choices facing U.S. policymakers and the main courses of action taken by the Eisenhower administration are adequately covered, the need to protect intelligence methods and sources (which also applies to material obtained from the Central Intelligence Agency) meant that some of the details of U.S. policy in Cambodia were not declassified. Current foreign policy considerations required that the details of the tension between Cambodia and another of its neighbors not be cleared for publication. Nevertheless, the documents on Cambodia printed and cited in this volume and included in the microfiche supplement give a good overall picture of U.S. policy toward and relations with Cambodia.

Most of the documents printed or cited in the Cambodian compilation are from the central files and from some selected decentralized or "lot" files of the Department of State. A small but significant portion of the records are from the Department of Defense's Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Office and from the records

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. President's Eisenhower's interest in Cambodia was limited and the documentation printed and cited from the Eisenhower Library is mostly of a briefing and informational nature.

The Laos compilation comprises the greatest part of this volume, reflecting the fact that during the 1958–1960 period the Pathet Lao insurgency grew from a small conflict into the Eisenhower administration's last major crisis in East Asia. The focus of the compilation alternates between Washington, Vientiane, and Bangkok. The volume begins with a visit to Washington by Lao Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and concentrates on his discussions with high-ranking Eisenhower administration officials. In early summer 1958, the emphasis shifts to the elections in Laos for the supplemental seats in the National Assembly. The extent to which the United States was prepared to assist anti-communist candidates is documented in some detail. Until the so-called "emergency" in mid-1959, the compilation concentrates on events in Laos. With the threat to Laos from the Pathet Lao and possibly from North Vietnam, Washington policymakers considered some far-reaching alternatives in Laos.

When the emergency receded in late 1959, the lack of coordination among U.S. Government agencies supporting different Lao anti-communist factions became more apparent. Here the need to protect intelligence sources and methods has somewhat blurred the record of the competition among various agencies for control of U.S. policy in Laos. Nevertheless, the reader can discern the broad outline of the conflict. That the Thai Government had close ties to Lao anti-communist politicians is already well-known. Both U.S.-Thai mutuality of interest and U.S.-Thai disagreement over policy in Laos is documented adequately, but sometimes the details of the implementation of joint Thai-U.S. policy have not been declassified.

While the Department of State's decimal files make up the bulk of the documents used for this compilation, there was strong interagency involvement, especially in crisis periods. Therefore, records from the files of the Eisenhower Library, the Secretary of Defense, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are included more extensively in the Laos than in the Cambodia compilation. At the Eisenhower Library, the NSC records in the Whitman File document the National Security Council's discussions of Laos; and the White House Office Files, Staff Secretary's Records, International Series, and Eisenhower Diaries contain briefing material for the President on the situation in Laos. Secretary of State Christian Herter's telephone conversations concerning Laos are in the Herter Papers at the Eisenhower Library. The Joint Chiefs of Staff records are particularly useful in delineating the U.S. role in the 1958

supplemental elections in Laos. Department of Defense records make up a significant portion of the documents printed, cited, and included in the microfiche supplement.

The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of officials at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, in particular David Haight, and the Department of Defense, especially Sandra Meagher, who assisted in the collection of documents for this volume.

Completion of the declassification of this printed volume and the microfiche supplement, and the final steps of their preparation for publication, coincided with the development of procedures since early 1991 by the Central Intelligence Agency in cooperation with the Department of State that have expanded access by Department historians to high-level intelligence documents from among those records still in the custody of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Department of State chose not to postpone the publication of this volume to ascertain how such access might affect the scope of available documentation and the changes that might be made in the contents of this particular volume. The Department of State, however, is making good use of these new procedures, which have been arranged by the CIA's History Staff, for the compilation of future volumes in the *Foreign Relations* series.

The declassification review process for this print volume resulted in the withholding from publication of 3 percent of the documents originally selected. Most of this material was in the Cambodia and Laos compilations and was withheld for the reasons described above. The remaining documents provide a full account of the major foreign policy issues and policies confronting the Eisenhower administration in East Asia, Cambodia, and Laos.

Editorial Methodology

The documents are presented chronologically according to Washington time. Incoming telegrams from U.S. missions are placed according to time of receipt in the Department of State or other receiving agency, rather than the time of transmission; memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance from the General Editor and the chief technical editor. The source text is reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Obvious typographical errors are corrected, but other mistakes and omissions in the source text are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or

that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount of material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of source text that were omitted. The amount of material omitted because it was unrelated, however, is not accounted for. All ellipses and brackets that appear in the source text are so identified by footnotes.

The first footnote to each document indicates the document's source, original classification, distribution, and drafting information. The source footnote also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates if the President or his major policy advisers read the document. Every effort has been made to determine if a document has been previously published, and this information has been included in the source footnote.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in this volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts have been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

Declassification Review

The Division of Historical Documents Review of the Office of Freedom of Information, Privacy, and Classification Review, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State conducted the declassification review of the documents contained in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 12356 on National Security Information and applicable laws.

Under Executive Order 12356, information that concerns one or more of the following categories, and the disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security, requires classification:

1) military plans, weapons, or operations;
2) the vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, projects, or plans relating to the national security;
3) foreign government information;
4) intelligence activities (including special activities), or intelligence sources or methods;
5) foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States;
6) scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security;
7) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities;
8) cryptology; or
9) a confidential source.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security and law. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments.

Acknowledgements

Under the supervision of former Editor in Chief John P. Glennon, David W. Mabon collected, selected, and edited the multilateral compilation and Edward C. Keefer the compilations on Cambodia and Laos. Dr. Mabon planned the volume and conducted the initial review. General Editor Glenn W. LaFantasie supervised the final steps in the editorial and publication process. Rita M. Baker and Althea W. Robinson did the technical editing. Barbara A. Bacon of the Publishing Services Division (Natalie H. Lee, Chief) oversaw the production of the volume. Breffni Whalen prepared the index.

William Z. Slany
The Historian
Bureau of Public Affairs

March 1992

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Unpublished Sources

Department of State

1. *Indexed Central Files:* The principal source of documentation for this volume was the indexed central files of the the Department of State. Most of the documents were selected from the following files:

033.51J11: Trip file for Lao officials to the United States including Souvanna Phouma's January 1958 visit to Washington
379: Major East Asian regional organizations such as SEATO
396.1-MA: Meeting at Foreign Minister level in Manila
396.1-WE: Meeting at Foreign Minister level in Wellington
601.51H92: Cambodia's diplomatic representation to Thailand
611.51H: U.S.-Cambodian relations
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743.5-MSP: U.S. military assistance to Australia
751G.00: Indochina/South Vietnam political affairs
751H.00: Cambodian political affairs
751H.5-MSP: U.S. military assistance to Cambodia
751H.11: Cambodia's Chief Executive
751J.00: Lao political affairs
751J.02: Lao government recognition
751J.13: Lao cabinet
751J.5: Lao national defense affairs
751J.5-MSP: U.S. military assistance to Laos
790.5: U.S. military relations with nations of East and South Asia
790.5-MSP: U.S. military assistance to East Asian and South Asian nations
793.02: Recognition of China
851J.13: Lao exchange rates
890.00: Economic matters in East and South Asia

2. *Lot Files:* Documents from the central files are supplemented by lot files of the Department, which are decentralized files created by bureaus, offices, divisions, and the Executive Secretariat. A list of the lot files cited or consulted in this volume follows:

Conference Files: Lot 62 D 181

Collection of documentation on visits to the United States by ranking foreign officials and on major conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the years 1956–1958, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123

Collection of documentation on visits to the United States by ranking foreign officials and on major conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the years 1955–1958, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559

Collection of documentation on visits to the United States by ranking foreign officials and on major conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the year 1960, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Conference Files: Lot 64 D 560

Collection of documentation on visits to the United States by ranking foreign officials and on major conferences attended by the Secretary of State for the years 1958–1959, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

EA (Laos) Files: Lot 68 D 77

Top Secret files of the Bureau of Far Eastern (later East Asian) Affairs relating to Laos for the years 1955–1961.

FE Files: Lot 60 D 90

Files maintained by the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs for the year 1958, including country files, letters, and memoranda of conversation.

FE Files: Lot 61 D 6

Files maintained by the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs for the year 1959, including country files, letters, memoranda of conversation, and conferences and visits.

FE Files: Lot 62 D 26

Files maintained by the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs for the year 1960, including country files, letters, memoranda of convesation, and conferences and visits.

FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73

Subject files of the Cambodia desk of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs for the years 1958–1960.

FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 63 D 3

Laos desk files of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, 1954–1958.

FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169

Subject files on Laos of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs for the years 1959–1961.

FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 66 D 77

Subject files of the Laos desk for the year 1960.

G/PM Files: Lot 64 D 341

Miscellaneous Top Secret files of the Combined Policy Staff of the Office of Political Military Affairs, 1958–1961.

INR–NIE Files

Files retained in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research containing copies of National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates for the years 1958–1960.

OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430

Master files of the Operations Coordinating Board for the years 1952–1960, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548

Files of the Policy Planning Staff for the years 1957–1961, including subject, area, and country files.

Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204

Exchanges of correspondence between the President and heads of foreign governments for the years 1953–1964, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199

Chronological collection of the Secretary of State's memoranda for the years 1953–1960, maintained by the Excutive Secretariat.

Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75

Chronological collection of the minutes of the Secretary's Staff Meetings for the years 1952–1960, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

S/P–NSC Files: Lot 62 D 1

Serial and subject master files of National Security Council documents for the years 1948–1961, maintained by the Policy Planning Council.

S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351

Serial master file of National Security Council documents and correspondence, and related Department of State memoranda for the years 1947–1961, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95

Administrative and miscellaneous National Security Council files, including records of action, for the years 1947–1963, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

State–JCS Meetings: Lot 61 D 417

Top Secret records of the meetings between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Department of State for the years 1951–1959, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

State–JCS Meetings: Lot 67 D 328

Top Secret records of the meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and representatives of the Department of State for the years 1959–1963, maintained by the Executive Secretariat.

Department of Defense

See also entries under Washington National Records Center.

Naval Historical Center

Burke Papers

Papers of Admiral Arleigh Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, 1955–1961.

United States Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

Department of the Army Communications Center Files

Department of the Army

SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas

President's Daily Appointment Book

Log of President Eisenhower's daily appointments, 1953–1961.

Herter Papers

Papers of Christian A. Herter, Under Secretary of State and then Secretary of State, 1957–1961.

Staff Secretary's Record

Records of the Office of the Staff Secretary, 1952–1961, including records of Paul T. Carroll, Andrew Goodpaster, L. Arthur Minnich, Jr., and Christopher H. Russell.

White House Office Files

White House collections including "Project Clean Up."

Whitman File

Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as maintained by his personal secretary, Ann C. Whitman. The following subfiles are cited in the volume: Eisenhower Diaries, National Security Council Records, International File, and Administrative Series.

National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

JCS Records

National Archives Records Group 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey

Dulles Papers, Dulles Daily Appointment Book

Daily log of the meetings and appointments of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for the years 1953–1959.

Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland

Department of Defense, Record Group 330

OSD Files: FRC 64 A 2093

Official subject files of the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Administrative Secretary to the Secretary of Defense for the year 1960.

OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698 and FRC 62B 1698

Country and general files of the Offfice of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs).

OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672 and FRC 62 B 1672

Country and general files of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) for the year 1959.

OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170 and FRC 64 B 2170

Country and general files of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) for the year 1960

Department of State, Record Group 84, Files of U.S. Foreign Service Posts

Phnom Penh Embassy Files: FRC 63 A 172 (formerly Lot 62 F 30)

Classified and unclassified central files of the Embassy for the years 1956–1958.

Phnom Penh Embassy Files: FRC 65 A 160 (formerly Lot 64 F 82)

Classified central files of the Embassy for the years 1959–1961.

Saigon Embassy Files: FRC 63 A 172 (formerly Lot 62 F 52)

Classified and unclassified central files of the Embassy for the years 1956–1958.

Saigon Embassy Files: FRC 65 A 571 (formerly Lot 64 F 131)

Classified and unclassified central files of the Embassy for the years 1959–1961.

Saigon Embassy Files: FRC 68 A 5159 (formerly Lot 66 F 89)

Top secret files of the Embassy for the years 1955–1963.

Vientiane Embassy Files: FRC 63 A 172 (formerly Lof 62 F 47)

Unclassified and classified central files of the Embassy for the years 1954–1958.

Vientiane Embassy Files: FRC 64 A 845 (formerly Lot 64 F 3)

Classified and unclassified central files of the Embassy for the years 1959–1961.

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Memoirs

Note: The Department of State takes no responsibility for the accuracy of these memoirs nor does it endorse their interpretations.

Colby, William, and Forbath, Peter. *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956–1961.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1965.

Johnson, U. Alexis. *The Right Hand of Power.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984.

Sihanouk, Prince Norodom. *My War With the CIA. The Memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk As Told to Wilfred Burchett.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

List of Abbreviations

ASCI, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army
ANL, *Armée Nationale de Laos* (Lao National Army)
ANZUS, Australia, New Zealand, United States
ARMA; ARMATT, Army Attaché
ARVN, Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BN, Battalion
BNA, Office of British Commonwealth and Northern European Affairs, Department of State
BPR, Bureau of Public Roads
CAT, Civil Air Transport
CDNI, Committee for the Defense of National Interests
CENTO, Central Treaty Organization
CFEP, Council on Foreign Economic Policy
CGUSAFPAC, Commanding General, U.S. Air Force, Pacific
CGUSARPAC, Commanding General, U.S. Army, Pacific
ChiCom, Chinese Communist
CHPEO, Chief, Programs Evaluation Office
CIA, Central Intelligence Agency
CID, Committee for Industrial Development
CIF, cartage, insurance, freight
CINCNELM, Commander in Chief, United States Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean
CINCPAC, Commander in Chief, Pacific
CINCPACAF, Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Force
CINCPACFLT, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet
CINCPAC POLAD, Political adviser to the Commander in Chief, Pacific
CINCUSARPAC, Commander in Chief, U.S. Army, Pacific
CND, *Centre National des Documents* (National Documents Center)
CNO, Chief of Naval Operations
CO, Commanding Officer
COB, close of business
CONUS, Continental United States
CPR, Chinese People's Republic
CT, Country Team
CY, Calender Year
DCI, Director of Central Intelligence
DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
DEPTAR, Department of the Army
Deptel, Department of State telegram
DF, Defense Forces
DLF, Defense Liaison Fund; also Development Loan Fund
DOD, Department of Defense
DRV, Democratic Republic of Vietnam
DS, Defense Support
ECAFE, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (of the United Nations)
Embdesp, Embassy despatch
Embtel, Embassy telegram
ETA, estimated time of arrival
FAL, *Forces Armées de Laos* (Armed Forces of Laos)
FARK, *Forces Armées Royales Khmeres* (Royal Khmer Armed Forces)
FDP, Free Democratic Party
FE, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State
FE/SEA, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State
FKR, Free Khmer Radio
FM (FMM), French Military Mission
FY, Fiscal Year
FYI, For Your Information
GA, General Assembly
GAO, Government Accounting Office
GOF, Government of France
GOI, Government of India
GRC, Government of the Republic of China
GUS, Government of the United States
GVN, Government of Vietnam

HCR, High Command for the Revolution
HM, His Majesty
HQ, Headquarters
IBRD, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICA, International Cooperation Administration
Icato, series indicator for telegrams from the International Cooperation Administration
ICC, International Control Commission
ICJ, International Court of Justice
IDA, Institute for Defense Analysis
IMF, International Monetary Fund
INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
IO, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
IRBM, Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
ISA, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
JCS, Joint Chiefs of Staff
KMT, Kuomintang
LHL, Lao Hom Lao (Rally of the Lao People)
LP, Luang Prabang (Royal capital of Laos)
MAAG, Military Assistance Advisory Group
MAP, Military Assistance Program
MATS, Military Air Transport Service
MLG, Military Liaison Group
MPO, Military Planning Office (of SEATO)
MSP, Mutual Security Program
NAC, North Atlantic Council; also National Advisory Council on International Monetary and Financial Problems
NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO, Non-Commissioned Officer
Niact, night action, communications indicator requiring immediate action
NIE, National Intelligence Estimate
NLHX(Z), Neo Lao Hat Xat (Zat) (Lao Patriotic Front, political arm of the Pathet Lao)
NSC, National Security Council
OASD/ISA, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
OB, Operation Brotherhood
OCB, Operations Coordinating Board
OSD, Office of the Secretary of Defense
P&I, propaganda and information
PA, Procurement Acquisition
PACOM, Pacific Command
PARU, Police Aerial Resupply Unit (Thailand)
PAVN, People's Army of Vietnam
PEO, Programs Evaluation Office
PL, Pathet Lao
POLAD, Political adviser
POW, Prisoner of War
PRESWHO, President White House Office, series indicator for telegrams from the President
refair, reference airgram
reftel, reference telegram
RG, Record Group
RGL, Royal Government of Laos
RKG, Royal Khmer Government
RLG, Royal Lao Government
RLP, Rally of the Lao People
ROK, Republic of Korea
RPL, *Rassemblement du Peuple Lao*
RTG, Royal Thai Government
RVN, Republic of Vietnam
SAC, Strategic Air Command
SC, United Nations Security Council
SEA, Southeast Asia; also Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State
SEATO, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
Secto, series indicator for telegrams from the Secretary of State when he is away from Washington
SF, Special Forces
SIDASP, *Service interministerial de documentation et action social et politique* (Interministerial Service of Social and Political Action)
SNIE, Special National Intelligence Estimate
SOA, Office of South Asian Affairs, Department of State
S/P, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
SPA, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Department of State
S/S, Executive Secretariat, Department of State
SVN, South Vietnam
SYG, Secretary-General of the United Nations
TAD, Temporary Assignment Duty

TC, Division of Language Services, Department of State
TDY, temporary duty
TERM, Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission
TG, Thai Government
TO&E, Table of Organization and Equipment
Toica, series indicator for telegrams to the International Cooperation Administration
Tosec, series indicator for telegrams to the Secretary of State when is away from Washington
UAR, United Arab Republic
UK, United Kingdom
UN, United Nations
UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA, United Nations General Assembly
UNP, Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs, Department of State
UNSC, United Nations Security Council
UNSYG, United Nations Secretary-General
USAF, United States Air Force
USARMA, United States Army Attaché
USG, United States Government
USIA, United States Information Agency
USIS, United States Information Service
USOM, United States Operations Mission
USRO, United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and European Regional Organizations
USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USUN, United States Mission at the United Nations
VM, Viet Minh
VN, Vietnam
WE, Office of Western European Affairs, Department of State

List of Persons

Note: This list generally covers only the years 1958–1960. All titles and positions are American unless otherwise indicated. Where no dates are given, the person usually held the position throughout the period.

Abramov, Aleksandr N., Soviet Ambassador to Cambodia
Alphand, Hervé, French Ambassador to the United States
Amory, Robert, Jr., Deputy Director of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency
Anderson, Daniel V., Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, from July 1959
Askew, Laurin B., Officer in Charge of Cambodia Affairs, Department of State

Bacon, Leonard L., Counselor of the Embassy in Laos until May 1959; thereafter Deputy Director of the Office of Northeast Asian Affairs, Department of State
Ballantyne, Robert J., Second Secretary and Consul of the Embassy in the United Kingdom from February 1958
Barre, Jean, adviser to Prince Norodom Sihanouk
Barrett, Robert S., Second Secretary and Consul of the Embassy in Cambodia, February–November 1959
Bell, John O., Deputy Coordinator for Mutual Security, Office of the Under Secretary of State, from December 1958
Berding, Andrew H., Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs
Boggs, Marion W., Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council from 1959
Bong Souvannavong, Lao Minister of Education, Public Health, and Cults, August 1958–January 1959; thereafter Minister of Telecommunications and Fine Arts
Boun Oum, Prince, Lao Secretary of State for National Defense, August 31–December 12, 1960; thereafter head of the Revolutionary Committee and Prime Minister of Laos (as recognized by the United States)
Brown, Brigadier General Rothwell, USA (ret.), Chief of the Programs Evaluation Office, Laos, 1958
Bunker, Ellsworth, Ambassador to India and Nepal
Burke, Admiral Arleigh A., USN, Chief of Naval Operations
Byrne, Patricia M., Officer in Charge of Laos Affairs, Department of State, until March 1958

Cabell, General Charles P., USAF, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Caccia, Sir Harold A., British Ambassador to the United States
Calhoun, John A., Deputy Director of the Executive Secretariat, Department of State, until February 19, 1958; thereafter Executive Secretary until September 4, 1960
Chase, Brigadier General Charles H., USA, Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Cambodia, 1959–1961
Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissmo, President of the Republic of China
Chou En-lai, Premier of the State Council and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China
Cleveland, Robert G., Officer in Charge of Economic Affairs, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State

Colegrove, Albert M., journalist for Scripps-Howard Newspapers

Corcoran, Thomas J., Officer in Charge of Laos Affairs, Department of State, from March 1958; Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief, Pacific, from January 1960

Cordier, Andrew W., Executive Assistant to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Couve de Murville, Maurice C., French Minister of Foreign Affairs after June 2, 1958

Cumming, Hugh S., Jr., Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

Cutler, Robert, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs to June 1958

Dap Chhuon (Chhuon Mochupich), General, FARK, Commander of Royal Cambodian Forces in Siem Riep and Kompong Thom provinces until February 1959

Dardian, Jean H., Director General of Political and Economic Affairs, French Foreign Ministry, until April 1959

de Gaulle, General Charles, Prime Minister of France, June 1–December 21, 1958; thereafter President

de la Mare, Arthur J., Counselor of the British Embassy in Washington

Desai, Manilal Jagdish, Indian Commonwealth Secretary

Diefenbaker, John G., Prime Minister of Canada

Diem, *see* Ngo Dinh Diem

Dillon, C. Douglas, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs until June 30, 1958; Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, July 1, 1958–June 11, 1959; therafter Under Secretary of State

Draper, William H., Jr., Chairman of the President's Committee To Study the U.S. Military Assistance Program

Dulles, Allen W., Director of Central Intelligence

Dulles, John Foster, Secretary of State until April 22, 1959

Durbrow, Elbridge, Ambassador to Vietnam

Eisenhower, Dwight D., President of the United States

Eisenhower, Major (then Lieutenant Colonel) John S. D., USA, Assistant Staff Secretary to the President after October 1958

Erickson, Eldon B., Consul and Second Secretary of the Embassy in Laos until May 1958; thereafter Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State

Felt, Admiral Harry D., USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, from July 31, 1958

FitzGerald, Dennis A., Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Agency

Fitzgerald, Desmond, Central Intelligence Agency

Fromer, Julian P., First Secretary of the Embassy in Laos after March 22, 1959

Garcia, Carlos P., President of the Philippines

Gassouin, Oliver, French Ambassador to Laos until 1959

Gates, Thomas S., Jr., Secretary of the Navy until June 1959; Deputy Secretary of Defense, June 8–December 1, 1959; therafter Secretary of Defense

Gleason, S. Everett, Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council until July 1959

Goodpaster, Brigadier General Andrew J., Jr., USA, Staff Secretary to the President

Gorce, Pierre, French Ambassador to Cambodia

Guillaumat, Pierre, French Minister of Armed Forces, June 2, 1958–February 5, 1960

Gray, Gordon, Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization until July 1958; thereafter President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs

Green, Marshall, Special Assistant for Political and Military Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, until July 1959; Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, July–October 1959

Hagerty, James C., Press Spokesman to the President
Hammarskjöld, Dag, Secretary-General of the United Nations
Hartshorn, Brigadier General Edwin S., USA, Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Cambodia
Hecksher, Henry D., First Secretary and Political Officer of the Embassy in Laos until January 1960
Heintges, Brigadier General John A., USA (ret.), Chief, Programs Evaluation Office, Laos, November 1958–1960
Herter, Christian A., Under Secretary of State until April 22, 1959; thereafter Secretary of State
Holt, John B., Counselor of the Embassy in Laos, January 1959–October 1960
Houghton, Amory, Ambassador to France

Irwin, John N., II, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs until September 26, 1958; thereafter Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

Jantzen, Robert J., First Secretary and Political Officer of the Embassy in Thailand
Jenkins, Alfred LeS., Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, June 1958-August 1959; thereafter Regional Planning Advisor, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs
Johnson, Robert H., member of the National Security Council Staff
Johnson, U. Alexis, Ambassador to Thailand from January 30, 1958
Jorgenson, Gordon L., Attaché and Political Officer of the Embassy in Laos after February 3, 1960
Jones, Howard P., Ambassador to Indonesia from February 20, 1958
Joxe, Louis, Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry until January 15, 1960

Katay Don Sasorith, Lao Minister of Interior, Economy, and Social Welfare until August 1958; Vice Premier and Minister of Interior and National Defense, August 1958–January 1959; Vice Premier, Minister of Interior and Cults, January 1959–December 1959
Kaysone, Phomvihan, Pathet Lao leader
Kellogg, Edmund H., Counselor and Consul General of the Embassy in Cambodia until September 1959
Khamphan Panya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos, August 1958–January 1959; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Education and Information, January 1959–January 1960; thereafter Foreign Minister
Khoman, *see* Thanat Khoman
Khrushchev, Nikita S., First Secretrary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Chairman of the Council of Ministers from 1958
Knight, Robert H., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Kocher, Eric, Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, to January 1958; Director, January 1958–June 1959
Kong Le, Captain, ANL, Commander of the Second Paratroop Battalion, Lao National Army; Chief of the Revolutionary Command after August 9, 1960
Kou Abhay, Prime Minister of Laos, January–June 1960
Krebs, Max V., Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State until June 1959; thereafter Special Assistant to the Secretary of State

Lacey, Lieutenant Colonel Peter J., Jr., USA, Military Attaché in Laos until March 1959

Lansdale, Colonel Edward G., USAF, Secretary of Defense's Deputy Assistant for Special Operations

Landy, Pierre, Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States until May 1959

Leaum Insisiengmay, *see* Thao Leaum Insisiengmay

Ledward, Richard T., Political Adviser to the Governor of Hong Kong

Lemnitzer, General Lyman L., USA, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army until July 1959; Chief of Staff, July 1959–September 1960

Lincoln, Anthony H., British Ambassador to Laos from March 1958

Lloyd, Selwyn, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs until July 27, 1960

Lockhart, Frank P., Jr., Acting Public Affairs Adviser, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, from September 1959

Lodge, Henry Cabot, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Lon Nol, Major General, FARK, Minister of Defense of Cambodia, January–April 1958 and after February 1959; concurrently Chief of Staff of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces

Lucet, Charles E., Minister-Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States until April 1959; therafter Director of Political Affairs and Central Administration, French Foreign Ministry

Magistretti, William L., Chief of the Division of Research and Analysis, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, until August 1958

Malik, Yakov A., Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom until January 1960; thereafter Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Manac'h, Etienne M., Director of Cabinet of the Ministry of the French Foreign Ministry, August 1958–March 1960; thereafter Chief of Asian-Oceanic Affairs of the French Foreign Ministry

Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the People's Republic of China through April 1958; Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party

Matlock, Clifford C., Special Assistant for Economic Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, from March 1958

McBride, Robert H., Director of the Office of Western European Affairs, Department of State, from September 1958

McCone, John A., Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission

McElroy, Neil H., Secretary of Defense until December 1959

Mendenhall, Joseph A., Officer in Charge of Vietnamese Affairs, Department of State, March 1958–July 1959; thereafter Counselor for Political Affairs of the Embassy in Vietnam

Menzies, Sir Robert Gordon, Prime Minister of Australia

Merchant, Livingston T., Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, November 18, 1958–August 20, 1959; Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, August 21–December 3, 1959; thereafter Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Minnich, L. Arthur, Jr., Assistant Staff Secretary to the President to August 1960

Mladek, Jan, Special Consultant to the Department of State for Lao monetary matters

Moore, Charles R., Counselor of the Embassy in Cambodia from September 1959

Moyer, Raymond T., Regional Director for Far East, International Cooperation Administration, until August 1959

Murphy, Robert D., Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs until August 10, 1959; Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, August 13–December 3, 1959

Nash, Walter, Prime Minister of New Zealand to December 1960

Nehru, Jawaharlal, Prime Minister of India and Minister of External Affairs

Nhiek Tioulong, General, FARK, Cambodian Minister of National Defense until February 1959; Prime Minister of Cambodia, April 1960

Nhouy Abhay, Lao Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Education and Fine Arts, January–June 1960

Nhu, *see* Ngo Dinh Nhu

Ngo Dinh Diem, President of the Republic of Vietnam

Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of and Counselor to President Ngo Dinh Diem

Ngo Trong Hieu, Republic of Vietnam's representative in Cambodia

Ngon Sananikone, Lao Minister of Defense, January–July 1958; Permanent Representative to the United Nations, August 1959–June 1960; Minister of Justice, Cults, Youth, and Sport, January–June 1960; Minister of Justice, June–August 1960

Nguyen Dinh Thuan, Secretary of State at the Presidency, Republic of Vietnam, 1958–September 1960; thereafter Assistant Secretary of Defense

Nguyen Ngoc Tho, Vice President of the Republic of Vietnam

Nixon, Richard M., Vice President of the United States

Nong Kimny, Cambodian Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Norodom Sihanouk, Prince, leader of Sangkum (Popular Socialist Community); Prime Minister of Cambodia, July 1958–April 1960; thereafter Chief of State

Norodom Suramarit, King of Cambodia until April 1960

Nouphat Chounramany, Lao Secretary of State for National Economy until July 1958; Minister for Information and Social Affairs, January–June 1960

Ouan Ratrikoun, Brigadier General, ANL, Commander of the Royal Armed Forces of Laos, August 1959–November 1960; Secretary of State for Defense and Veterans Affairs, August–October 1960; thereafter member of the Savannakhet Revolutionary Committee

Oudone Sananikone, Lieutenant Colonel, ANL, Lao Secretary of State for Social Affairs, January–December 1959; Minister of Public Works, Plan, Transport and Telecommunications, January–June 1960

Palmer, Gardner E., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Economic Affairs until November 1959

Parsons, J. Graham, Ambassador to Laos until February 8, 1958; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, February 1958–July 1, 1959; thereafter Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs

Penn Nouth, Prime Minister of Cambodia until July 1958; thereafter Ambassador to France

Peters, Richard B., Deputy Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief, Pacific, after September 1959; Regional Coordinator for the Far East, Office of Coordinator for Mutual Security, Department of State, from September 1960

Pho Proeung, Prime Minister of Cambodia from April 1960; also Minister of Interior and Culture

Phoui Sananikone, Lao Minister of Foreign Affairs until July 1958; Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, National Economy, Public Works, Posts, and Telecommunications, August 1958–December 1959

Phoumi Nosavan, Brigadier General, ANL, Lao Secretary of State for National Defense and Veterans Affairs, January–December 1959; Minister of National Defense and Veterans Affairs, January–August 1960; Vice Premier and Minister of the Interior, August–September 10, 1960; thereafter member of the Revolutionary Committee

Phoumi Vongvichit, Pathet Lao leader; Minister of Cults and Fine Arts until July 1958

Pignon, Leon, Director, Political Affairs, Ministry of French Overseas Territories, through 1959

Pillai, Sir Narayana Raghaven, Secretary-General, Indian Ministry of External Affairs

Price, C. Hoyt, Officer in Charge of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia Affairs, Department of State, until September 1958

Ratanov, Anatoly, Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Laos, November 1960

Reinhardt, G. Frederick, Counselor of the Department of State until February 1960

Richards, Arthur L., Operations Coordinator, Office of the Under Secretary of State, until July 1958

Riddleberger, James W., Director of the International Cooperation Administration from March 1959

Riley, Vice Admiral H. D., USN, Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Pacific, from February 1958

Robbins, Captain B. A., Jr. USN, Regional Director, Far East, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

Robertson, Walter S., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs until June 30, 1959

Saccio, Leonard J., General Counselor, International Cooperation Administration, until August 1958; Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Administration, August 1958–September 1960

Sam Sary, Cambodian Ambassador to the United Kingdom until June 1958; deputy leader of the Khmer Serei after February 1959

Savang Vatthana, Crown Prince of Laos until October 1959; thereafter King of Laos

Sarasin, *see* Pote Sarasin

Sarit Thanarat, Field Marshal, Royal Thai Army, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Thailand until February 1959; thereafter Prime Minister of Thailand and concurrently Acting Director General of Police

Scranton, William W., Special Assistant to the Secretary of State

Seaton, Fred A., Secretary of the Interior

Selkirk, Earl of (George Nigel Douglas Hamilton), British Commissioner for Singapore after 1959 and Commissioner General for Southeast Asia from 1960

Selwyn Lloyd, *see* Lloyd

Sim Var, Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense of Cambodia until June 1958; thereafter Cambodian Ambassador to Japan

Sisco, Joseph J., Officer in Charge, United Nations Political Affairs, Department of State, until August 1958; thereafter Deputy Director of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs

Smith, Horace H., Ambassador to Laos, March 26, 1958–June 21, 1960

Smith, James H., Jr., Director of the International Cooperation Administration until January 31, 1959

Snow, William P., Ambassador to Burma from November 9, 1959

Somsanith, Lao Minister of Interior, January–June 1960; Prime Minister of Laos, June–August 1960

Son Ngoc Thanh, leader of the Khmer Serei (Free Khmers)

Son Sann, Cambodian Minister of Finance, January–April 1958; adviser, Ministry of Finance, April–July 1958; thereafter First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Southone, General, FAL, Chief of the Lao General Staff; Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs, January–December 1959

Souphonouvong, Prince, leader of the Pathet Lao and Neo Lao Hat Xat; Minister of Planning, Reconstruction, and Urbanism until August 1958; under arrest after May 1959; escaped May 1960

Souvanna Phouma, Prince, Prime Minister of Laos until July 1958; Lao Ambassador to France until May 1960; President of the Lao National Assembly until August 1960; thereafter Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Defense

Souvannavong, Ourot R., Lao Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations until August 1959

Sprague, Mansfield D., Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs until September 1958

Steeves, John M., Political Adviser to the Commander in Chief, Pacific, until March 1959; Consul General at Hong Kong and Macau, March–October 1959; thereafter Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs

Strom, Carl W., Ambassador to Cambodia until March 8, 1959

Stump, Admiral Felix B., USN, Commander in Chief, Pacific, to July 31, 1958

Thanat Khoman, Thai Ambassador to the United States, 1958–February 1959; thereafter Minister of Foreign Affairs

Thao Leaum Insisiengmay, Lao Minister of Finance and Justice until July 1958; Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, August 1958–January 1959; thereafter Minister of Finance and Economy

Thuan, *see* Nguyen Dinh Thuan

Tobler, John H., Director of the U.S. Operations Mission in Laos after August 28, 1959

Trimble, William C., Ambassador to Cambodia from February 16, 1959

Twining, General Nathan F., USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to September 1960

Unger, Leonard, Counselor of the Embassy in Thailand

Usher, Richard E., Special Assistant for SEATO Affairs, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State; thereafter Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs

Wan Waithayakon, Prince, Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs until 1958; Deputy Prime Minister from 1959

Warner, Frederick A., Head of the Southeast Asia Department, British Foreign Office

Weiss, Seymour W., Director for Military Assistance Coordination, Office of the Under Secretary of State, February 1958–September 1959; Senior Planning Officer, Military Assistance Coordination

Whittington, Floyd L., Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Department of State, January–August 1958; thereafter Counselor for Economic Affairs of the Embassy in Thailand

Wilcox, Francis O., Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs

Williams, General Samuel T., USA, Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Republic of Vietnam, to September 1960

Wood, Chalmers B., Second Secretary of the Embassy in Vietnam until September 1959; thereafter Officer in Charge of Vietnam Affairs, Department if State

EAST ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

GENERAL U.S. POLICIES TOWARD THE REGION: ACTIVITIES OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA TREATY ORGANIZATION; MEETINGS OF THE SEATO COUNCIL; ACTIVITIES OF THE ANZUS POWERS; SEATO INTEREST IN THE SITUATION IN LAOS; U.S. CONCERN WITH REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA [1]

1. Memorandum From the Chairman of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy (Randall) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Cutler) [2]

Washington, January 21, 1958.

SUBJECT

NSC 5506 [3]

1. On January 18, 1956 the National Security Council, by NSC Action No. 1506–b, [4] requested the Council on Foreign Economic Policy to review NSC 5506 (Future Economic Assistance to Asia) in the light of the revised Basic National Security Policy then in preparation.

2. The CFEP formally reviewed NSC 5506 on January 15, 1958 and recommends that it be cancelled for the following reasons:

a. NSC 5506 is outdated since the conditions underlying it, namely the inauguration of a large-scale regional assistance program in the Far East, are no longer applicable.

b. Many of the principles and objectives set forth in NSC 5506 have been superseded by later statements in NSC 5602/1 and NSC

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[1] Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 1 ff. Related documentation appears in the compilation on Laos in this volume and in the compilation on Thailand in volume XV. A combined microfiche supplement to this volume and to volume XV will be published covering the East Asia-Pacific region, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Malaya.

[2] Source: Department of State, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Asia 1956–1958. Confidential. A covering memorandum from Lay to the NSC dated January 22 is included in the microfiche supplement to this volume.

[3] Entitled "Future U.S. Economic Assistance to Asia," dated January 25, 1955; *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XII, pp. 16–22.

[4] See the editorial note, *ibid.*, p. 163.

5707/8[5] which provide broader and more ample policy guidance on this subject.

c. The summary findings and recommendations of the Report of the Committee on Asian Regional Economic Development and Cooperation (pages ii through v of CFEP 562/1),[6] which were approved by the CFEP on January 15, 1958 and referred to appropriate agencies for their consideration are generally consistent with the point of view expressed in NSC 5506, reflect more current thought on Asian regional development, and provide more applicable courses of action.

3. In connection with the action taken on NSC 5506, the CFEP, at its meeting of January 15, 1958, recommended that a copy of the Report of the Committee on Asian Regional Development and Cooperation (Tab A)[7] and the CFEP action thereon be transmitted to the NSC for its information.

4. Attached as Tab B is a copy of the CFEP minutes of January 15, 1958 reflecting the above action.

Clarence B. Randall[8]

[5] Both entitled "Basic National Security Policy," dated March 16, 1956, and June 3, 1957, respectively; *ibid.*, vol. XIX, pp. 242–268 and 507–524.

[6] Circulated under date of September 11, 1957, and distributed again, unmodified, as CFEP 562/1, January 7, 1959. The Summary Recommendations of this report are printed *ibid.*, vol. XXI, pp. 378–379.

[7] Neither Tab A nor Tab B is printed.

[8] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

2. Memorandum of Discussion at the 353d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, January 30, 1958[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1–3.]

4. *Asian Regional Economic Development and Cooperation* (NSC 5506; NSC Action No. 1506; NSC 5602/1; NSC 5707/8; Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated January 22, 1958)[2]

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Prepared by Boggs on January 31.

[2] See footnote 3, *supra.*

Mr. Cutler briefed the Council, stating that he was introducing the subject in the absence of Mr. Randall. (A copy of Mr. Cutler's briefing note is filed in the minutes of the meeting, and another is attached to this memorandum.)[3]

The National Security Council:[4]

a. Noted:

(1) The Report of the Committee on Asian Regional Economic Development and Cooperation, and the CFEP action thereon, transmitted by the reference memorandum of January 22, 1958.

(2) That the Operations Coordinating Board is to serve as the coordinating agency for implementation of the summary findings and recommendations of the Report and for the programs and actions resulting from further consideration of the Report by the appropriate Executive departments and agencies; and will prepare periodic reports on such implementation and on such programs and actions for the information of the National Security Council and the Council on Foreign Economic Policy.

b. Concurred in the recommendation of the Council on Foreign Economic Policy, prepared pursuant to NSC Action No. 1506–b and transmitted by the reference memorandum of January 22, 1958, that NSC 5506 be cancelled; and noted concurrence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in this recommendation.

Note: The actions in a and b above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the CFEP and OCB for information. The action in b above also transmitted to all holders of NSC 5506.

[Here follows item 5.]

Marion W. Boggs

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[3] Cutler's briefing note is printed below. The minutes of all National Security Council meetings are in the National Archives and Records Administration, RG 273, Records of the National Security Council, Official Meeting Minutes File.

[4] Paragraphs a and b and the Note that follows constitute NSC Action No. 1853. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

Attachment

Briefing Note Prepared for the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Cutler)[5]

Washington, January 28, 1958.

ASIAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (JANUARY 31, 1958)

1. Following the end of the war in Indochina, the Council adopted a new policy on the Far East (NSC 5429/2 of 8/20/54,[6] superseded by NSC 5429/5 of 12/22/54)[7] which included a provision that the U.S. should "encourage the prompt organization of an economic grouping . . . of free Asian states . . . "[8] and that through this grouping or otherwise the U.S. should provide substantial economic and technical aid "to accelerate the present slow rates of economic growth and to give the peoples in this area a sense of present progress and future hope" which was then lacking.

2. The Council established (Oct 6/54)[9] a special committee to prepare courses of action to carry out these policies. The resulting report, which was approved by the CFEP and adopted by the NSC as NSC 5506 (2/5/55) was of as much significance for what it rejected as for what it accepted.[10] It provided for strengthening the existing Colombo plan organization and for a modest increase in U.S. aid, but rejected establishment of a new regional economic grouping and of a greatly expanded U.S. aid program.

3. On January 24, 1956 the Council requested the CFEP to review this policy in the light of a revised basic national security policy then in preparation and to report back its findings. The CFEP review was subsequently postponed because of the several reviews of the Mutual Security program which were initiated in 1956.

4. Last spring Mr. Randall also established a new CFEP committee to prepare a report on Asian regional economic development and cooperation. The Summary Findings and Recommendations in this Committee's report, which has been circulated to the Council for its

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[5] Confidential. Possibly drafted by Robert H. Johnson, a Special Staff member of the NSC.

[6] Entitled "Review of U.S. Policy in the Far East;" *Foreign Relations*, 1952–1954, vol. XII, Part 1, pp. 769–777.

[7] Entitled "Current U.S. Policy Toward the Far East;" *ibid.*, pp. 1062–1072.

[8] Ellipses in the source text.

[9] See *Foreign Relations*, 1952–1954, vol. XII, Part 1, pp. 927–932.

[10] In the source text, the words "was of as much significance for what it rejected as for what it accepted" have been crossed through.

information, were approved by the CFEP after extensive review by the agencies. The CFEP referred the entire report, including its more detailed recommendations, to the agencies for their consideration in developing suitable regional programs and actions. The OCB has agreed to serve as coordinator for this further work by the agencies and will prepare regular progress reports for the information of the NSC and the CFEP.

5. Among the more important of the Summary Recommendations of this report are the following:

a. That the U.S. should expand its efforts to foster Asian regional economic cooperation, working through existing regional organizations and with countries individually and in small groups and should not seek establishment of any new regional organizations.

b. That consideration should be given to seeking Asian support for basic resource surveys, and, in particular, that a group of U.S. specialists should study the development of iron and steel in Asia.

c. That the U.S. should support expanded regional technical cooperation and give priority to expanding present efforts in the English language field in Asia.

6. The CFEP now recommends that NSC 5506 be cancelled on the grounds:

a. First, that though NSC 5506 had a certain historical significance in answering the question of whether the U.S. should inaugurate a large-scale regional assistance program in Asia, the new report of the CFEP committee reflects more accurately current views in the government on Asian regional development.

b. And second, that many of the principles and objectives in NSC 5506 have been superseded by more ample policy guidance in the Basic National Security Policies which were adopted subsequently.

7. The J–C–GS concur in the recommended cancellation of NSC 5506.[11]

[11] In the source text, numbered paragraph 7 is handwritten.

3. Letter From the Secretary of State to the President[1]

Manila, March 11, 1958.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Our trip out, though long, was comfortable.[2] We have just completed our first day of the conference,[3] and as far as conference business goes it has produced no surprises. Two United States items of some delicacy were approved: The first—acceptance of a NATO proposal for contact with other defense organizations, and secondly authority to have contacts at the military personnel level with non-pact countries of the area, such as Korea and Formosa. Tomorrow there will be general discussion which I hope will be of the sort which has proved interesting and useful in other conferences.

Lloyd came to see me on the evening of my arrival and, with Casey and Nash, came to lunch today. He pressed to get together frequently but I suggested that there might be danger if we gave the appearance of setting up an inner circle. I have however agreed to meet with him and with Pineau tomorrow evening. This will be the first meeting of the three foreign ministers in more than a year so I imagine the press will build it up. The British in fact have already let word of it out. The French seem to be very anxious at least to give the appearance of reestablishing the old "tripartite" forum, and the British seem to be willing to go along. We shall be talking about the much talked about "summit" meeting and the new French suggestion with reference to a Western Mediterranean Pact.

Faithfully yours,

Foster[4]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 991. Secret. Drafted by Dulles. Transmitted in Dulte 4, which is the source text, with the note: "For Acting Secretary for President from Secretary."

[2] The Fourth Meeting of the SEATO Council of Ministers was held at Manila March 11–13. Source texts of telegrams which originated from the U.S. Delegation are from the Conference File, and are therefore copies of the telegrams as sent. Verbatim transcripts of the sessions are *ibid.*, CF 981. The Classified Report of the Secretary General, dated March 11, is *ibid.*, CF 980. For text of Dulles' speech at the opening public session, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 31, 1958, p. 506.

[3] Summaries of the first day's sessions are in Sectos 17, 18, and 19 from Manila, all dated March 11. (Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 990; all included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Dulte 4 bears this typed signature.

4. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Manila, March 12, 1958.

Secto 24. Paris pass USRO. Department pouch Baghdad. Second closed session Fourth SEATO Council.[2]

Summary:

Agenda Item 6: Council approved Report and Recommendations of Military Advisors including 1958–9 budget of $101,610.00. Chief Delegates expressed views that passage of another year without overt hostilities in treaty area no reason for complacency and that preparedness should be increased. All commented on usefulness of SEATO military exercises and urged their continuance and expansion. Arrangement between U.S. and Philippines for establishment Pacific Military Defense College cited by most delegates as substantial addition to defense planning. France requested further information on subject.

Delegates congratulated General Santos[3] for accomplishments as Chief, Military Planning Office, expressing regret Santos leaving SEATO for post in Philippine Defense Department. Gratification expressed at obvious progress made by Military Planners during first year.

New Zealand Delegate emphasized that Manila Treaty primarily a defense pact and envisions forces fully prepared to resist attack. He commended military advisors for recognition insurgent threat and intention conduct further planning with civil organization on this subject.

Pakistan Delegate stressed Pak determination "fight for justice and peace." Increased fighting power of Pak Armed Forces attributed mainly to SEATO. Emphasized Pakistan had manpower for SEATO defense effort but needed increased military aid. Reminded colleagues of double Pakistan responsibility to meet threat posed not only by Communists but by "some neighbors" and asked SEATO members seriously consider increasing military aid.

Phil Delegate commended work of Military Advisors with Committee of Security Experts in coordinating SEATO intelligence activities.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 396.1–MA/3–1258. Secret; SEATO. Drafted in the political section of the Embassy in Manila. Repeated to London, Paris, Karachi, Bangkok, Canberra, and Wellington.

[2] Held March 12, from 10 a.m. to noon.

[3] Secto 24 originally read "Castro;" it was corrected in Secto 16, March 13.

Thai Delegate noted an increase in military accord among member states and encouraged increased exchanges of military and security information. He said Thailand has shortage of communications facilities and recommended establishment of permanent SEATO communications center at Bangkok.

UK Delegate approved report and budget but expressed regret that procedures for civil organization review of military budget had not been settled. Recommended this be done prior next Council meeting. He expressed view that non-member observers to military exercises should be invited by sponsoring country and not by SEATO.

French Delegate suggested invitations to military observers be cleared with other SEATO members.

UK Delegate objected, restating view that invitations be matter within sole discretion of sponsoring state and not be made "responsibility" of other members or of SEATO as an organization. Said "UK preferred not to be consulted."

U.S. and Australian Delegates supported UK position.

French Delegate yielded but recommended Council examine results of this policy at next meeting.

The UK position on invitations to non-member observers was agreed upon and made a matter of record.

Council proceeded to agenda item 7—"Exchange of Views" with agreement that Thai Delegation speak first.

Summary of Exchanges:

Thailand (Prince Wan):

Birth of SEATO caused Communists to substitute subversion for armed aggression in Treaty area, but possibility of reversion to violence ever present. Communists continue employ subterfuges such as urging ban on nuclear tests, identifying selves as true friends of Asians, pretending encourage neutralism and nationalism and offering economic aid. These and other tactics designed cloak Communists with "respectability" but have as main aims reduction of domestic opposition to Communism and weakening ties between Asia and West. Peoples must become aware that subversion directed towards all fields—economic, educational, cultural, religious—and that subtle methods veil true motives.

Thailand intensely interested in developments in neighboring countries. Was gravely concerned over Laos but believes Lao PriMin now aware Communist danger and will remain strictly neutral. Recent statements by Prince Sihanouk indicate Cambodia already aware Communist danger and intends resist it.

Vietnam openly interested in SEATO and participates whenever possible in its activities, such as Baguio Seminar last November and Bangkok Round Table last month. [4]

Malaya cooperating with Thai on problem of border terrorists and agreement now reached for effective joint border operation.

During January visit to Bangkok, President Sukarno reaffirmed Indonesian faith in UN charter. Thai views with regret present internal strife in Indonesia which attributable to Communist influence.

Believe stability is returning to Burma. Recent surrenders of various insurgent groups to Burmese forces an encouraging sign.

Thailand internal security constantly improving. Overwhelming defeat of left-wingers in December election and present government's adherence to UN Charter and alignment with SEATO and with free world in foreign policy matters is encouraging. Public criticism of SEATO greatly decreased; subject has not become campaign issue in approaching by-elections. Thai aware that danger of Communist subversion still exists in Thailand and that Muslims, large Chinese minority group, and Vietnamese refugees are main subversion targets.

Soviets attempting propagandize Thais through cultural and educational exchanges and offers of medical equipment. Red China inviting newsmen and student leaders to visit mainland. Thai Government watching these moves with extreme care. Thailand hopes danger of subversion can be eliminated from area through SEATO help.

Pakistan (Minister Qizilbash):

Pakistan happy to note that general situation in Treaty area has remained relatively quiet. South Vietnam under leadership of Diem earnestly applying itself to solution internal problems.

Situation in Cambodia seems improved. While government "remains wedded to neutralism", press and PriMin displaying more sympathetic attitude towards free world and more cautious one towards Communist bloc.

Malayan situation encouraging. Malaya applying self to political and economic problems with vigor and enthusiasm. Malaya membership in SEATO would be mutually beneficial but decision is for Malaya and outside pressure should be avoided. Malaya–Pakistan relations being strengthened with opening of Pakistan High Commission in Kuala Lumpur near future.

[4] Reference is to the SEATO Seminar on Countering Communist Subversion, held at Baguio, Philippines, and the Southeast Asian Round Table, a cultural exchange held under SEATO auspices.

Pakistan shares anxiety over situation in Laos. Believe Laos Government took calculated risk with Pathet Lao but hope government will maintain strict controls through enforcement of recently enacted anti-subversion law.

Developments in Indonesia most disturbing; situation confused. Due to mistakes of Indo leaders, Communists seem to be emerging as major political faction. Some indications that "true democratic forces" are attempting assert themselves. Best prospect for stability is revival of constitutional democracy in Indonesia. Concerned over Indonesian position on territorial waters which insupportable under international law and not acceptable to Pakistan.

In India Communists doubled their voting strength during last general elections. Have formed government in Kerala and making headway in some other states. Growth of Indian Communism due largely to New Delhi acceptance of Moscow propaganda, patronage of Commie front organizations and acceptance of some $270 million of Soviet aid.

By contrast, Burma situation stabilizing as government seems to be shedding its illusions about Communism.

Communist penetration increasing somewhat in Ceylon. Govt accepted $20 million in Soviet aid and may accept more.

Communist infiltration in Afghanistan is serious threat to Pakistan. Soviets have given Afghans some $145 million and are assisting build-up of armed forces and facilities. Soviet influence on Afghans has created situation where tribes on both sides of Pakistan–Afghanistan border becoming vulnerable to Soviet subversion.

Pakistan continues to enforce legal ban on Communists but efforts to infiltrate political, labor and student groups continue under sponsorship of Communist Party of India. Communists continue to exploit economic problems and discontent amongst Pakistan people caused by unsettled disputes with India.

Principal threat to Treaty area generally is international Communism. Basic military threat is from Soviet Union although military power of Communist China and North Vietnam considerable. Determined stand of SEATO coupled with economic problems in USSR and Red China has deterred Soviet aggression.

While military threat decreased, subversion has increased, Communists attempting by every propaganda means of demonstrating greater compatibility between selves and Asians than between Asians and free world. Formidable economic offensive coupled with slogans of peaceful co-existence and anti-colonialism have had significant effect.

Council agrees SEATO countries must continue take vigorous action and show more vigilance individually and collectively. A foremost danger to collective pacts in Treaty area arises from Communist en-

couragement of "neutralism". Soviet offensive cannot be countered by free countries increasing aid to Soviet recipients. Many free countries, particularly the U.S., were giving generous help before Soviets even thought of it. Economic offensive can be countered only by "cooperation within the free world".

All SEATO countries share the U.S. view expressed by Mr. Dulles in recent speech at National Press Club Washington when he said "President Eisenhower's letter to Chairman Bulganin should dissipate once and for all any impression that the United States does not want to negotiate, or is afraid to negotiate with the Soviet rulers".[5] It seems obvious Soviets have no intention of adhering to their theme of peaceful coexistence.

Communist propaganda support of anti-colonialism in Asia can be countered by adherence to spirit of Pacific Charter, by promotion of self-government and securing of independence of all countries whose peoples desire it and are able to undertake its responsibilities.

Philippines (Senator Sumulong):[6]

Vietnam a strong opponent of Communist aggression and subversion.

Situation in Laos more unstable and bears watching.

Trust that new Cambodian Government will be aware of Communist danger and follow Sihanouk's expressed intention to counter subversion.

Free China is Philippines closest neighbor to north. Its fall into Communist hands would place Philippines in grave danger.

Deeply concerned with fate of "blood-brothers" in Indonesia. But will remain completely neutral in this fight. Announced policy of nonintervention by Philippines should be followed by all other nations. However, distressed to learn Indonesian forces receiving Soviet arms and aid. Though not a SEATO member, Indonesia an important part of Southeast Asia. Indonesia lies along Philippines first line of defense. If Communists in control, subversion of Muslims on Philippine Island of Mindanao a serious threat. Physical penetration of Philippines possible due to inability of Philippine sea and air forces to patrol adequately.

Domestically Philippines attempting put own house in order by enforcement anti-Communist law and controls. Primary Philippine hope is for continued closer friendship with free nations.

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[5] For text of Secretary Dulles' address made before the National Press Club on January 16, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 3, 1958, p. 159.

[6] Senator Lorenzo Sumulong, Vice Chairman of the Philippine Delegation and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Philippine Senate.

New Zealand:

Mr. Nash confirmed that the recently elected New Zealand Government considered SEATO relationships of greatest importance. Continuing exchanges by Council Representatives in Bangkok are of great value. While past year one of relative quiet in Treaty area dramatic developments elsewhere were of significance to SEATO. Soviets made large gains in scientific fields and armaments race. Developments tend give rise to feeling of despair. Ordinary people unable understand why nuclear tests cannot be ended and disarmament effected. But their expressed concern indicates the strength of freedom and democracy in contrast acquiescence Soviet people in all policies Soviet Government.

The very lack of freedom of Communist peoples to question policies will eventually stall progress of Communist powers. Failure of Soviet leaders to disclose facts to their people or grant them adequate rewards for the sacrifices which have made possible recent Soviet successes will work against them.

Soviet leaders fear war as the end of civilization but are prepared to use all other means to gain their ends. These include subversion, insurrection and political and economic penetration. Communists are aware that SEATO countries not vulnerable to overt propaganda or political or economic penetration. Accordingly they are concentrating on unaligned countries. Eventually these countries may "recognize the Trojan horse" and become suspicious of Communists bearing gifts. Economic and political penetration can be countered by free world aid given in genuine friendship. We must continue to best of ability to satisfy urgent needs of such countries. If their economies fall into chaos the need to regain stability will cause them to follow in steps of Russia and China.

The Treaty area in comparison with Middle East and North Africa is relatively quiet. Developments in Indonesia are of great concern to New Zealand but outsider should take part in this domestic problem. Whatever the outcome of present Indonesian situation, standard of living must be raised unless we wish to witness a complete Communist takeover. All Western nations should continue and expand their aid to this distressed country.

Indonesian claim to "territorial waters" worries New Zealand which has joined other countries in formally protesting this claim. Attempted arbitrary restriction of high seas by Indonesia is of direct concern to SEATO nations.

In Vietnam Diem is doing remarkable job with land reform and resettlement programs but will need economic aid for some time to come. U.S. is to be commended for its continuing assistance to free Vietnam.

While recent developments in Laos are disturbing there is indication government becoming aware dangers inherent in Pathet Lao agreement. Believe Laotian Government taking steps to counter subversive activities. On this it should receive SEATO support.

New Zealand has close ties with Malaya and is gratified with work of new Malay Government. UK deserves tribute for preparing Malaya for self government.

Only real answer to Communism lies in raising standards of living, advancing education, and encouraging free labor organizations, efficient administration and democratic institutions. Destructive criticism or "mere exposure" of subversive aims and methods is no solution.

Emergence of Communist China as great power was reason for establishment of SEATO. SEATO has been effective in countering Chinese military threat. However, rise of China brings with it the delicate question of recognition of its government. Time eventually must come when we must face up to question of recognition. New Zealand is aware of serious consequences flowing from act of recognition and will face this problem with great deliberation. We cannot escape fact Peking Government will continue effective control of China mainland in foreseeable future. Its influence on events in Asia and Pacific will increase. Rapid growth of Chinese political power and accompanying pressures will affect SEATO profoundly. Settlement of outstanding Far Eastern problems may become impossible unless Communist China is made party to the settlement.

Member nations of SEATO must bring about a relaxation of present tensions by showing "flexibility" and recognizing just claims of others. Firmness must be coupled with patience.

Dulles

5. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Manila, March 12, 1958.

Secto 25. Paris pass USRO. Department pouch Baghdad. Following is text Secretary's statement delivered today closed session Fourth SEATO Council Ministers Meeting Manila March 11–13, 1958, Agenda Item V "Exchange of Views on Matters Affecting Treaty Area":

"Mr. Chairman, the important addresses already made by my fellow ministers have covered in considerable detail the situation in the Southeast Asia area. I will not attempt to duplicate what has already been done so well. I merely observe [with] some satisfaction, as it is generally conceded I think, that this treaty area feels more secure from the danger of war than was the case during the stormy days when this Organization was formed and when fighting had barely subsided in Indochina and was going on in the Straits of Taiwan. This should not lead us to ignore the fact that the military menace exists and that there is a vast military potential which hostile forces are building up, but at the moment we do feel somewhat more secure from the military threat.

There remains the danger from subversion of which the preceding speakers have spoken. That danger is particularly acute in these area countries which are still independent but the governments of which publicly take the attitude that in the world today the regimes established by international Communism, such as those of Soviet Russia and Communist China, can be equated with the governments established in the free world by democratic processes—that all the governments are equally good, or, if you will, equally bad.

That equating has serious consequences. It dulls the alertness of the people in these countries to the insidious plotting of the Communists. It affords those Communist plots a much better chance of success and any government which has told its people that the two societies can properly be equated finds it very difficult thereafter to take stern measures to deal with the internal menace of Communists. We see that danger around about us. It is conspicuous at the moment perhaps in Indonesia, and where that danger exists it is not just a danger to those countries, it is also a danger to us. An individual who refuses inoculation against a contagious disease endangers not merely

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 990. Confidential; SEATO. Repeated to London, Paris, Karachi, Bangkok, Wellington, and Canberra.

himself but the community, and so it is with governments that fail to alert their people—they imperil not only themselves but their neighbors. This is perhaps the greatest immediate threat that the treaty area faces.

I will say a word now about the attitude of the United States toward China. A year ago I stated the policy of the United States at our meeting at Canberra[2] as being not to extend political recognition to Communist China and to oppose its admission to the United Nations.[3] Subsequently at San Francisco in 1957 I expounded fully the reasons for our position in a speech[4] which was made with the full authority and prior approval in every detail of President Eisenhower. I brought here with me copies of that speech because it is the fullest and I think the only full exposition of the American position and the reasons for it. I am leaving copies with the Secretariat where they will be available to any who wish to have a copy.

I say today, Mr. Chairman, that the policy of the United States remains as stated in that speech for the reasons therein stated, and I can also state that that reasoning will continue to dictate United States policy in this matter.

I have been particularly struck in this connection with what has been said in some of the preceding speeches by some of our Asian friends as to the danger to them of Chinese minorities in their countries in the event that those minorities should be brought under the influence and direction of the Chinese Communists.

There is another matter to which I would allude which has been referred to to some extent as least in prior speeches and which I know is on the minds of many, and that is the question of the apportionment by the United States of the assistance which it gives abroad as between different countries, some of which are members of collective defense organizations with us and some of which are not. I would be the last to claim that in this difficult matter the United States exercises perfect wisdom but I do want to make clear the policies which guide us. The United States is striving to help to combat the spread of Communism in the world. We do not of course neglect humanitarian considerations or the special needs of our friends and allies, but the sums which we have available for external assistance are, unfortunately, limited and those funds have to be rationed, and, indeed, closely rationed, and, as a result, the bulk of our Mutual Security Program funds is used at

[2] Held March 11–13, 1957. For documentation, see *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 295 ff.

[3] For text of the Secretary's statement on China policy made March 12, 1957, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 1, 1957, p. 351.

[4] Entitled "Our Policies Toward Communism in China," delivered June 28, 1957. Text is *ibid.*, July 15, 1957, p. 91.

times and places and in manners which seem to us best designed to serve our common desire and our common purpose; that is, that Communist imperialism shall be thwarted in its aggressive designs.

Our Mutual Security Program is not a 'give-away' program designed to confer presents upon those with whom we feel a special relationship of friendship and affection. If the program, I might say, were a 'give-away' program it would not be supported, in any such scale as now exists, by our people or by our Congress. It is a program which is designed for a purpose; if you will, for a selfish purpose, the purpose being to help to sustain for the United States an environment, a world environment of healthy independent nations. That is what the United States wants, and I think that our desire in that respect coincides with that of others who also want to be independent and have a healthy political, economic and social system.

The Soviet Union, on the contrary, wants a growing world environment of satellites with more Hungaries, more East Germanies, more Outer Mongolias, and more North Koreas. That is where the free world purposes and Communist purposes come into collision. That in essence is the Cold War. Our Mutual Security Program is designed to deal with it and to assure that this Cold War will be won by the cause of freedom and of independence.

In times of open war nations do not deploy their armed forces in accordance with sentimental concepts. They seek in the light of cold analysis to do what will serve the cause of victory. And so it is with the economic resources we use in the Cold War. We provide substantial amounts of economic assistance to nations of whose policies we do not altogether approve. That I know hurts some of you, but I can assure you it hurts us more than it hurts you! We do it not because it is pleasurable for us to do it. We would rather do it elsewhere. We do it because these nations are at least independent nations which desire to remain independent and because if they were captured by Communism and taken into the Communist camp, that would have serious consequences upon other free nations. In that sense such United States assistance to such countries is in effect indirect aid to our allies, and it is for that reason that we give it.

It would not, I am sure, serve the interests of the Asian members of SEATO if we provided economic assistance only to them and did nothing for, and became indifferent to the fate of, all other independent nations of the Far East and South and Southeast Asia. The Pact nations of the area would be faced by dangers so much greater that they would far more than offset the immediate benefit of such a policy; certainly, at least, that is our conviction, and that is the reason why we do what we do.

Turning to another aspect of our economic assistance, I would like to allude to the impression that sometimes arises that our assistance is given not for preserving the distinctive and independent character of the other free societies which we try to help, but to try to remake these other societies over into the image of ourselves.

I can understand why there is a basis for such criticism. Most Americans believe intensely in our own American way of life and it can hardly be expected that they will not in certain respects show that belief in the American way of life as they function abroad. Indeed, it is not only inevitable but I think it is quite right that Americans should believe in their own system. But I can assure you that we are not stupid enough to believe that we could, even if we tried, uproot the distinctive, ancient and honored cultures of other lands. And I assure you it is not American policy to try to impose our way of life upon others.

Our own system is a system based on nonconformity and on tolerance of difference. That dedication to diversity does not end at the water's edge. The United States has no other aim in its foreign economic programs than to assist other free nations to remain independent and thus be able to fulfill their own destinies in ways of their own choosing.

Now I turn to another aspect of these matters. The United States is associated with a great number of other countries. We belong to, or are closely identified with, NATO, the Organization of American States, the Baghdad Pact, and we have bilateral relations with other countries. And sometimes we are asked which do we think is the most important, which is the one we really favor the most.

That is like asking whether it is more fatal to have your heart penetrated by a bullet or to have your throat cut with a knife. There is not only interdependence between the members of the different pacts but there is also interdependence between the pact areas themselves. No pact area anywhere would be safe if any one of the others was lost, nor could the members of any pact be indifferent, or be free from risk of involvement, if another pact area were involved in major war. Interdependence exists throughout the free world. There can be no ranking between areas, each of which is vital."

[Here follow Dulles' general views on the world situation, U.S.-Soviet relations, and U.S. national security policy; included in the microfiche supplement.]

Dulles

6. Letter From the Secretary of State to the President[1]

Manila, March 12, 1958.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We have concluded the second day of the Conference. It was a useful day as all of the eight Foreign Ministers made important statements on the Asian situation in particular and the world situation in general.

I have tried very hard to get to Nash, the new New Zealand Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, the proper concept of United States policies, and I think I have succeeded. He said at the end of today's meeting that he would make a statement singling out my speech for approbation. He added jokingly that perhaps when he read it he could find something with which he disagreed, although when he heard it, he could find nothing with which to disagree.

His Party came into power on a platform calling for recognition of Communist China, but I think at least he will go slow in any such course of action. He is having quite a good education here, and I think will end up in a good mood of cooperation.

[Here follows discussion of the possibility of a summit conference; included in the microfiche supplement.]

Tomorrow we face up to the communiqué and I hope I have your sympathy at this trying, but apparently inescapable, ordeal.

Faithfully yours,

Foster[2]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 991. Secret; Priority. Transmitted in Dulte 7, which is the source text, with the note: "Eyes Only Acting Secretary for President from Secretary." Dulte 7 was drafted by Dulles.

[2] Dulte 7 bears this typed signature.

7. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Manila, March 13, 1958.

Secto 27. Paris pass USRO. Department pouch Baghdad. Third closed session[2] summary:

FonMin Lloyd for UK opened by congratulating SEATO Asian members on work they had done combating international Communism. Promised UK assistance give info to Thailand on questionable Chinese transiting Hong Kong mentioned by Prince Wan in latter's morning speech. (Privately UK states such arrangements already in effect but due to faulty liaison Thai Govt Prince Wan had not been informed).

Lloyd noted change in pattern of Communist action in SEATO area to subversive tactics particularly in efforts to normalize relations within the area. Cited example of Pathet Lao and said Commies using elections to spread Communism in country and therefore much depends on results of upcoming election. Likewise, Commie infiltration in disorganized Indonesian situation cause for anxiety to SEATO. Expressed hope peace would be reestablished with democratic government throughout country. UK is concerned over Indonesian policy on territorial waters. Noted as favorable development Burmese Prime Minister's[3] statement rejecting Marxism as incompatible with Buddhism. Expressed guarded optimism over situation in Vietnam. Was gratified at compliments made during morning session over UK handling of Malaya. Stated Malaya must be allowed to decide for itself without pressure regarding membership in SEATO. Noted that Singapore will achieve internal self-government with UK retaining responsibility for internal and external defense.

On general themes Lloyd stated his belief that independence, security, freedom and a rising standard of living are the major SEATO goals. To achieve these, SEATO must, inter alia, (1) develop a sense of need for interdependence and reduce duplicating and over-lapping efforts; (2) be fully aware of dangers inherent in economic recession and take collective action to prevent one; (3) take a more offensive line in propaganda matters, for example, disarmament, in which realm free

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 990. Confidential; SEATO. Drafted in the political section of the Embassy in Manila and approved by U. Alexis Johnson. Repeated to London, Paris, Karachi, Bangkok, Canberra, and Wellington.

[2] Held March 12 from 2:40 p.m. to 5 p.m.

[3] U Nu.

world has furnished all the bold ideas which would have brought relief to current tension, yet hollow Soviet "ban the bomb" propaganda has had great impact in Asia. Economic aid is another example of successful Soviet propaganda, and despite fact that US aid is "program of greatest disinterested generosity world has ever seen", Soviets, through propaganda, have held up as doing most.

Re summit talks, Lloyd said UK prepared to negotiate any time at any level if useful results would ensue. However there must be no unilateral weakening of strength from off-chance Soviets would follow suit. Adequate pre-summer [*summit*] preparations must be made. While agreement need not be reached on all issues, issues on which agreement likely must first be disentangled.

Finally, strength and flexibility of SEATO must be maintained; only that way can peaceful coexistence become a reality.

Pineau for France stated defense of free world must be fought not in military field alone but in propaganda designed to sway masses. This was reason why France stressed importance for SEATO of economic and cultural efforts. In this connection expressed gratification that SEATO has agreed to exchange of information between pacts. In stating that defense in terms of modern weapons is still a political matter, Pineau noted two current Soviet objectives: (1) campaign against IRBM installations, (2) de-nuclearization of certain areas. With regard to (1), Pineau noted that countries under Soviet pressure not to accept IRBM's have long been host to other weapons capable of destroying Soviets without inciting latter's reaction. Re (2) he could see no military advantage in denuclearized zones but emphasized these proposals can't be underrated, particularly propaganda-wise.

Pineau proceeded with review of main areas of Soviet threat and stated Middle East represents the greatest. Impossible to reverse Soviet gains there and concentration must be on containing them. Felt that threat to North Africa is logical result from Middle East pressure. Continued that if North Africa falls to form of nationalism subservient to Communism then defense of Western Europe becomes gravely difficult and some form of neutralism would doubtless appear there.

Regarding SEATO region, Pineau traced in some detail recent developments in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam along usual French lines. He expressed guarded optimism regarding general situation in Laos and Cambodia and cited particularly need for economic and social aid from other powers as crucial to political stability. Praised progress in Viet Nam. There is hope for better relations between protocol states in view of their recognition of external threat posed by Communism. If these states are able to grow stronger then SEATO will have been justified.

Secretary spoke next for U.S. Text cabled as Secto 25,[4] rptd unn other SEATO capitals. Casey spoke for Australia and associated himself with French appreciation of situation in Laos but felt that only future would reveal whether experiment in [*with*] Pathet Lao would succeed. For this reason essential that SEATO members do all in their power to assure that Laotians understand Commie techniques and also keep up measure of economic aid.

On Indonesia, Casey recognized delicacy of discussing internal affairs of non-member state but took view that Indonesian situation and particularly growing Commie influence there is of most serious concern to SEATO. Casey then ranged over a number of different topics. He paid warm tribute to Phil "Operation Brotherhood" in Vietnam and Laos as best form of technical assistance. Neutralist sentiment dangerous SEATO program. Suggested three methods by which SEATO can combat: (1) demonstration to neutral governments that Sino-Soviets are not on same moral plane and threat to small countries only comes from Sino-Soviet bloc; (2) convince neutral countries they must interpret their neutrality in truly neutral spirit; (3) speak out publicly in support of SEATO and principle of collective self-defense.

On disarmament Casey stressed enormity of ChiCom manpower and therefore any disarmament agreement must include conventional as well as nuclear weapons. Echoed Lloyd's sentiments regarding danger of depression and said that trend of commodity prices in SEATO area must be watched carefully because further deterioration these prices would have serious political consequences. On recognition of Peking, related that at recent Australian Chiefs of Mission Conference Ambassadors present reported no indications future recognition by States to be accredited. Casey stated categorically no change in Australian position regarding recognition. Stated Australia will maintain aid to Colombo Plan on same level and indicated his great personal interest in work of ECAFE. Mentioned Aussie program of inviting Asian personalities for visits and favorable results. Ended by eloquent statement of appreciation of U.S. "super generous aid" since end of war. US taxpayer assuming vast burden to maintain democracy throughout world. Felt Australian representative appropriate to mention this because Australia has not nor will seek direct aid.

Session ended with Nash stating he was going to make public report to New Zealand on realistic farseeing objective statements for peace made by delegates during day and that none more constructive or logical than that made by US delegate.

Dulles

[4] Document 5.

8. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Manila, March 13, 1958.

Secto 38. Paris pass USRO. Department pouch Baghdad. Fourth closed session Fourth SEATO Council morning closing day occupied with items "Other Business" and "Communiqué".

Other Business

Nash for New Zealand extended invitation to host next Council meeting in New Zealand. This accepted and Council Reps are to work out timing.

UK (Lloyd) expressed feeling that slower than hoped for progress was being made on program of exposure of Communist activity. Suggested that each permanent rep be instructed by his govt to take urgent action to facilitate program. Secretary for US associated himself with UK position on need for quick action. Suggested that SecGen well qualified to issue statements as appropriate and when speed essential. Noted that US rep has authority to give instant approval for US in such cases. Suggested other member nations give their reps similar authority with caveat that such statements as may be issued do not bind govts themselves. Idea of empowering SecGen to make statements where urgency required approved after French (Pineau) interpolation that SecGen inform Council Reps of text his statement and reason for immediate issuance. Pineau also stated this procedure could be reviewed at later date in light of experience.

Casey raised question of need for appropriate SEATO emblem. Was agreed Council Reps would carry on efforts to achieve agreed design.

Communiqué

Major discussion revolved on: (1) whether or not Indonesia and situation there should be mentioned directly; decision was make no specific mention;[2] (2) how strong section on subversion should be; and (3) how neutralism should be treated.

Dulles

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 990. Confidential; SEATO. Drafted in the political section of the Embassy in Manila and cleared with U. Alexis Johnson. Repeated to London, Paris, Karachi, Bangkok, Canberra, and Wellington.

[2] According to the Verbatim Minutes of this session, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Thailand favored making some mention of the Indonesian situation in the communiqué, while the United States, Pakistan, New Zealand, and France were opposed. At

Continued

9. Editorial Note

In the course of his remarks to the first session of the Far East Chiefs of Mission Conference, held at Taipei March 14–17, Secretary Dulles commented on the SEATO Council Meeting as follows:

"As to the SEATO meeting, it was, I think, a very good meeting—the best we have had. I have been to all the meetings of SEATO, as well as to the organizational meeting. I think that the public impression of SEATO is shaking down, so that its limitations are understood and its usefulness also understood. When we started, people thought SEATO should be created in the image of NATO with commanders, area forces, etc., and unless we did, SEATO would not serve a useful purpose. Even if we wanted to do this, the geographical nature of SEATO does not lend itself to that. We have been preaching that dependence should be placed not on U.S. forces but on commitments expressed in treaties and backed up by mobile power which could be brought to bear where necessary. I felt no large resistance to that concept; it is now pretty well accepted. I felt that there was less effort to pull and haul in different directions. A great effort was made to concentrate on areas of agreement and on the purposes of SEATO.

"We had a new member in the sense that the New Zealand Government, represented by Nash, was new. He came into power, committed to policies which are somewhat neutralist in character and which also considered the possibility of recognition of the Chinese Communists. I think that owing at least in part to the excellent relations Ambassador Russell has established with him as well as to our talks at SEATO, progress has been made in bringing Nash's thinking into line with the members of SEATO. He is going from there to see Nehru, whom he admires, so he might change back. It may become a question of getting him back again if he gets off the track." (Transcript of the Secretary's remarks is filed with an unnumbered despatch from Taipei received May 2; Department of State, Central Files, 120.1493/5–258; included in the microfiche supplement)

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the end of the discussion, the Council members who had favored mention of Indonesia gave way, citing the rule of unanimity. (SCM/58/VR–3, March 13; *ibid.*, CF 981)

For text of the communiqué issued March 13, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 31, 1958, p. 504. Text of the Secretary's remarks made at the closing public session that day is *ibid.*, p. 506. A summary of the closing public session is in Secto 36 from Manila, March 13. (Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 990; included in the microfiche supplement)

10. Letter From the Secretary of State to the President[1]

Manila, March 13, 1958.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We have now finished the SEATO aspect of the trip and our Manila visit except for a final dinner being given tonight by President Garcia. I may have a chance at the dinner to finalize the date for his visit to Washington.[2]

Everything went extremely well at the SEATO meeting and the series of talks made in closed session by the foreign ministers was of particularly high character and marked this meeting of the Council as superior in my opinion to any yet held.

Following the meeting I had a highly confidential talk with Lloyd and Casey about the situation in Indonesia. It did not produce any very bright or constructive ideas but was I think useful particularly in giving Casey, who was quite jittery on this subject, some idea of our own concern and of our own activity.

Our plane, while resting here at Manila, lost an engine in some strange way, so that we will go on to Taipei tomorrow morning in a C54, hoping that a substitute can be installed and the Constellation can pick us up somewhere as we turn from Taipei eastward.

Doug MacArthur is here and seems to be in fine shape. I asked him to come so that we could have a quiet talk together about the situation in Japan and Okinawa, which I think requires some of the enlightened statesmanship of which we often talk.

Your prayers with reference to the communiqué were answered,[3] and after three nerve-wracking hours, a reasonably satisfactory agreement was reached. At least it was not as bad as when we made the communiqué at Bermuda with Winston and Laniel.[4]

Faithfully yours,

Foster[5]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 991. Secret; Priority. Transmitted in Dulte 8, which is the source text, with the note: "Eyes only Acting Secretary for President from Secretary." Dulte 8 was drafted by Dulles.

[2] This visit took place June 17–20.

[3] In Tedul 13 to Manila, March 12, marked "For Secretary from President" and concerned mainly with arrangements for Garcia's visit, the President concluded: "With warm regards and my prayers that your patience will outlast the preparation of the communiqué." (Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 991)

[4] Reference is to the tripartite meeting of heads of government held in Bermuda December 4–8, 1953, attended by President Eisenhower, British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, and French Prime Minister Joseph Laniel.

[5] Dulte 8 bears this typed signature.

11. Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting, White House, Washington, March 21, 1958, 8:30–10:05 a.m.[1]

[Here follow a list of participants and discussion of unrelated subjects.]

Far East Situation—Sec. Dulles touched quickly on the SEATO meeting, then explained the current crisis between the National Chinese Government and the Japanese Government, resulting from the former's inability to acquiesce in the right recently gained by the Chinese Communists in a particular agreement with the Japanese allowing the Communist flag to fly on Japanese territory.

In reporting on his Far East travels, Sec. Dulles believed most significant the fact that in that part of the world the news relating to the United States is all bad. In contrast to the careful control of all news out of Russia so as to show the Soviets off to good advantage, the United States is seriously hurt by the great play given to any statement of any US official that can be used to show the United States as being militaristic. The Secretary did not know what could be done, even though he had talked to some press people. He thought the situation almost beyond repair and an extremely unfortunate state of affairs. It had impressed him even more this time than on previous trips.

There was some discussion as to the type of information sent to the Far East by the wire services. It was appreciated that responsibilities are divided but that in any event the hard news originating in the United States and sent out by the wires provides great material for exploitation by journalists and commentators in the Far East who seek to serve the Russian interests by highlighting things adverse to the United States and ignoring things favorable to the United States.

The Vice President suggested that Cabinet officers go out of their way to receive foreign editors when they visit Washington under the Exchange Program. It was also noted that the State Department is giving attention to providing materials and encouragement to our Ambassadors towards having background chats with local influential people.

Gen. Persons[2] and the President noted the similar usefulness of background conferences within the United States, although the President made clear that he could not himself have such conferences in his present office.

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Cabinet Papers. Confidential. Drafted by Minnich. A list of persons present (27) is included in the microfiche supplement.

[2] Major General Wilton B. Persons, Deputy Assistant to the President.

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

LAM

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12. National Security Council Report[1]

NSC 5809 *Washington, April 2, 1958.*

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON U.S. POLICY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

REFERENCES

A. NSC 5612/1[2]
B. NSC Action No. 1826[3]
C. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated February 20 and March 3, 1958[4]
D. NSC Action No. 1885[5]

The National Security Council, the Acting Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Director, Bureau of the Budget, by Memorandum Action as of April 2, 1958 (NSC Action No. 1885), adopted the draft revisions of the Laos, Thailand, Malaya and Singapore sections of NSC 5612/1, prepared by the NSC Planning Board in accordance with NSC Action No. 1826–b and transmitted by the reference memorandum of February 20, 1958; subject to:

a. The following comment by the Attorney General:

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[1] Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Files, 092 Asia (6–25–48) (2). Top Secret. The text of NSC 5809 was subsequently revised; see footnote 9 below. The revised text, approved November 10, 1959, is included in the microfiche supplement.

[2] *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 252–263.

[3] Adopted by the NSC at its meeting on December 6, 1957, NSC Action No. 1826 states that the NSC "noted that the NSC Planning Board would review the section of NSC 5612/1 pertaining to the Federation of Malaya, and would consider after the December elections in Thailand the need for review of pertinent sections." (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95)

[4] In the February 20 memorandum, Lay enclosed the draft revisions of the Laos, Thailand, Malaya, and Singapore sections of NSC 5612/1 for consideration at the NSC meeting of March 13. (*Ibid.*, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351; included in the microfiche supplement) The March 3 memorandum has not been found.

[5] Dated April 2. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95)

"Agree, subject to the substitution of the phrase 'of the proviso' for the word 'indicated' in the last line of paragraph 64a so as to make identical the references to the taking of independent action in paragraphs 64a and 64d. It is felt that such an amendment would obviate any future implication that independent U.S. military action in defense of Malaya might be undertaken without regard to the proviso in paragraph 19."

b. The following comment by the Secretary of Commerce:

"The Department of Commerce does not consider that grant economic assistance to the Federation of Malaya is necessary or desirable at this time and understands the revision does not incorporate such provision. Also the Department does not feel that loans to the Federation of Malaya for economic development purposes are necessary at this time and should a proposal for such loans be advanced, would desire participation in the early stages of consideration."

The above revisions to NSC 5612/1, including the revision proposed by the Attorney General, were approved by the President on April 2, 1958. The President directs that NSC 5612/1, as amended and approved and enclosed herewith as NSC 5809, be implemented by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and designates the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency.

A Financial Appendix on the subject, which accompanied NSC 5612/1, has not been reproduced. A new Financial Appendix will be prepared when the policy is next reviewed.

NSC 5809 supersedes NSC 5612/1.

James S. Lay, Jr.[6]

Attachment

[Here follows a table of contents.]

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON U.S. POLICY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA[7]

I. General Considerations

1. *General.* Since mainland Southeast Asia does not represent a unified area, courses of action must generally be determined in the light of widely varying country situations. However, basic objectives and main directions of U.S. policy can and should be established on a regional basis.

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[6] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

[7] For purposes of this paper, "Mainland Southeast Asia" consists of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam, Malaya and Singapore. In addition, there is attached a supplementary statement of policy on the special situation in North Viet Nam. [Footnote in the source text.]

2. *Consequences of Communist Domination.* The national security of the United States would be endangered by Communist domination of mainland Southeast Asia, whether achieved by overt aggression, subversion, or a political and economic offensive.

a. The loss to Communist control of any single free country would encourage tendencies toward accommodation by the rest.

b. The loss of the entire area would have a seriously adverse impact on the U.S. position elsewhere in the Far East, have severe economic consequences for many nations of the Free World, add significant resources to the Communist bloc in rice, rubber, tin and other minerals, and could result in severe economic and political pressures on Japan and India for accommodation to the Communist bloc. The loss of Southeast Asia mainland could thus have far-reaching consequences seriously adverse to U.S. security interests.

3. *The Communist Threat*

a. *Overt Aggression.* Although Communist policy now emphasizes non-military methods, the danger of overt aggression will remain inherent so long as Communist China and North Viet Nam continue a basically hostile policy supported by substantial military forces. There is only a cease-fire in Viet Nam and sporadic hostilities continue in Laos. The Viet Minh have continued to improve their combat capabilities since the Geneva Conference of 1954.

b. *Subversion.* In most countries of Southeast Asia a threat also arises from the existence of extensive local Communist capabilities for all types of subversion activities, ranging up to armed insurrection. Additionally, the large overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia offer a fertile field for subversion. The weak internal security systems of the Southeast Asian states make them highly vulnerable to such activities.

c. *Communist Political and Economic Offensive.* At present overt aggression and militant subversion are less likely than an intensified campaign of Communist political, economic and cultural penetration in the area. The political instability, economic backwardness, export problems, and extreme nationalism of these countries provide many opportunities for Communist exploitation by trade and economic assistance, conventional political and diplomatic activity, and extensive infiltration. This offensive now constitutes a threat to U.S. interests more subtle and more difficult to cope with than other threats.

4. *U.S. Role.* The United States is likely to remain the only major outside source of power to counteract the Russian-Chinese Communist thrust into Southeast Asia. Thus, the retention of this area in the Free World will continue to depend on the extent and effectiveness of U.S. support as well as on the local efforts of the countries themselves.

a. *Political.* The underlying purpose of U.S. assistance in the area is to help the non-Communist countries develop more effective political organizations, strengthen their internal administration and enlist greater allegiance in both urban and rural districts. In part, this purpose will be served by programs for military and economic aid dealt with below. In part it will require an intensification of present programs for training competent Asian managerial and technical personnel. And, in part, new approaches, both governmental and private, will be needed. These should not concentrate exclusively at the national level, but should include activities designed to strengthen and vitalize indigenous traditions and institutions and to have an impact on village life, rural society, and educational systems.

b. *Military.* Because these countries do not have the capability of creating armed forces which could effectively resist large-scale external aggression, the United States will be required to provide a basic shield against Communist aggression. For the foreseeable future, local will to resist aggression will depend on a conviction in Southeast Asia that the United States will continue its support and will maintain striking forces adequate to counter aggression in Southeast Asia with the capabilities described in current basic national security policy. The combination of such U.S. forces and local will to resist would constitute the best deterrent against aggression. Should the deterrent fail, this combination would also provide the most effective insurance that, in conjunction with indigenous and allied forces, the United States could suppress aggression in the area quickly and in a manner and on a scale best calculated to avoid the hostilities broadening into general war.

c. *Economic and Technical.* The insistence, throughout most of the area, on economic development provides the strongest lever for the exertion of influence by the Free World or by the Communist bloc. Without increased external help from some source, most of the governments of the area will be unable, even with adequate indigenous effort, to manage the political demand for rapid betterment in the conditions of life and provide for sound economic development. Failure to obtain such assistance from the Free World will tend to drive these countries toward economic dependence on the Communist bloc. The general preference in Southeast Asia for Western technical and economic assistance gives the United States and the Free World an opportunity to obtain primacy over Communist efforts in key economic sectors. The outcome may, however, be strongly influenced by the success with which the Free World can cope with Communist efforts to exploit the existence of Southeast Asian export problems, particularly those involving rice. In the period ahead, flexibility of U.S. procedure and rapidity of U.S. action will be increasingly important, if effective advantage is to be taken of unexpected and transient opportunities.

5. *The Problem of Regional Association.* Over the long run, the small, vulnerable, and essentially dependent nations of Southeast Asia cannot exist satisfactorily as free nations without closer associations than now exist.

6. *The Problem of Alignment.* To preserve their independence, strengthen their internal stability and protect themselves against aggression, some countries in Southeast Asia prefer to join regional security arrangements. Some, however, prefer to avoid alignment with other nations. The basic objective of both groups is to maintain the independence of their countries free of outside interference or dictation, and the independence and vitality of both are important to the United States and to each other.

II. Policy Conclusions

7. The national independence of the mainland Southeast Asian states is important to the security interests of the United States. If such independence is to be preserved, U.S. policies must seek to build sufficient strength in the area at least to identify aggression, suppress subversion, prevent Communist political and economic domination, and assist the non-Communist governments to consolidate their domestic positions. U.S. policy should not depend primarily on the degree and nature of Communist activity at any particular time, but should seek to promote these goals within the limits of the economic capacities of the countries concerned and U.S. resources available for the area.

8. Where a national determination to maintain independence and oppose external aggression is sufficiently manifest, the United States should be prepared to provide military assistance based upon the missions of the forces as indicated in the "Country Courses of Action" (Part V, below).

9. In the event of aggression against a Southeast Asian state willing to resist, the provisions of the UN Charter or the SEATO Treaty should be invoked, but the United States should not forgo necessary action in behalf of such a state or states because of the possibility that other allies might be loath to participate or to furnish more than token military forces.

10. In the long run, the ability of the non-Communist governments to attain political, economic and social objectives will be the dominant factor in defeating the Communist attempts to dominate Southeast Asia. The United States should assist the non-Communist states of the area to formulate and execute programs designed to promote conditions of sound development, to demonstrate that they can achieve growth without reliance on Communist methods or dependence on the Communist bloc, and to give their peoples a greater stake in the continued independence of their countries.

11. The United States should continue to make clear its own devotion to the principle of collective security, its belief that regional security arrangements provide maximum protection at minimum cost for all, and its expectation that a country's decision to participate in such arrangements is based on its own calculation of its best interests and does not of itself constitute a claim for increased financial aid. Where countries participate, measures to assure adherence are desirable, normally including preferential treatment in the fields of economic and military assistance as justified by U.S. strategic objectives. Where new opportunities for affiliation develop they should be encouraged. The United States should, however, accept the right of each nation to choose its own path to the future, and should not exert pressure to make active allies of countries not so inclined. The genuine independence of such countries from Communism serves U.S. interests even though they are not formally aligned with the United States. The United States should accordingly support and assist them so long as they remain determined to preserve their own independence and are actively pursuing policies to this end.

III. Objective

12. To prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into or becoming economically dependent upon the Communist bloc; to persuade them that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the Free World; and to assist them to develop toward stable, free, representative governments with the will and ability to resist Communism from within and without, and thereby to contribute to the strengthening of the Free World.

IV. Regional Courses of Action [8]

13. Support and assist the countries of the area on the basis of their will and ability to defend and strengthen their independence.

14. Respect each country's choice of national policy for preserving its independence, but make every effort to demonstrate the advantages of greater cooperation and closer alignment with the Free World, as well as the dangers of alignment with the Communist bloc.

15. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to cooperate closely with each other on a basis of mutual aid and support, and support indigenous efforts to develop regional associations so long as they do not weaken SEATO or the spirit of resistance to Communism.

16. Participate actively in SEATO, and seek to develop both its military and non-military aspects in a manner that will convincingly demonstrate the value of SEATO as a regional association, the useful-

[8] The following coures of action are not applicable to the Crown Colony of Singapore at this time: paragraphs 13, 14, 16, 22–a, and 32. [Footnote in the source text.]

ness of which extends beyond deterrence of Communist expansion. Encourage limited participation of non-Communist, non-SEATO Asian nations in certain SEATO activities.

17. Encourage and support the spirit of resistance among the peoples of Southeast Asia to Chinese Communist aggression as well as to indigenous Communist insurrection, subversion, and propaganda.

18. Maintain, in the general area of the Far East, U.S. forces adequate to exert a deterrent influence against Communist aggression, in conformity with current basic national security policy.

19. Should overt Communist aggression occur in the Southeast Asian treaty area, invoke the UN Charter or the SEATO Treaty, or both as applicable; and subject to local request for assistance take necessary military and any other action to assist any mainland Southeast Asian state or dependent territory in the SEATO area willing to resist Communist resort to force: Provided, that the taking of military action shall be subject to prior submission to and approval by the Congress unless the emergency is deemed by the President to be so great that immediate action is necessary to save a vital interest of the United States.

20. In case of an imminent or actual Communist attempt to seize control from within, and assuming some manifest local desire for U.S. assistance, take all feasible measures to thwart the attempt, including even military action after appropriate Congressional action.

21. As appropriate, assist the police forces in Southeast Asian countries to obtain training and equipment to detect and contain Communist activities.

22. In order to strengthen the non-Communist governments of the area and to help forestall their economic dependence on the Communist bloc:

a. Provide flexible economic and technical assistance as necessary to attain U.S. objectives.

b. Encourage measures to improve the climate for private investment, both domestic and foreign, and to mobilize the maximum investment of U.S. private capital in the area consistent with the prevailing climate.

c. Encourage United Nations agencies, other Colombo Plan countries, and other friendly countries to contribute available resources to promote the economic growth of Southeast Asia.

d. Encourage the Southeast Asian countries to orient their economies in the direction of the Free World and to rely primarily on non-Communist markets and sources of supply for trade, technicians, capital development, and atomic development.

e. In carrying out programs involving disposal of U.S. agricultural surpluses abroad:

(1) Give particular attention to the economic vulnerabilities of the Southeast Asian countries and avoid, to the maximum extent practicable, detracting from the ability of these countries to market their own exportable produce.

(2) Give particular emphasis to the use of the resources to promote multilateral trade and economic development.

f. Promote as appropriate the expansion of trade relationships between the United States and the countries of Southeast Asia.

g. Take advantage of adverse local reactions to Communist barter agreements with countries in the area by demonstrating the advantages to these countries of conducting trade on a multilateral commercial basis.

23. Make a special, sustained effort to help educate an expanding number of technically competent, pro-Western civilian and military leaders, working bilaterally, through the United Nations, with the other Colombo Plan countries and with other friendly countries. Stress the development of potential and secondary leadership to support the thin stratum of elite now administering the central governments and bring to their support modern techniques and technology in public information and organization.

24. Place increased emphasis on community development projects, educational programs, and other activities aimed to influence the welfare and attitudes of the people at the village level.

25. Strengthen informational, cultural and educational activities, as appropriate, to foster increased alignment of the people with the Free World and to contribute to an understanding of Communist aims and techniques.

26. Hold or reduce the number of U.S. officials in each country to a strict minimum consistent with sound implementation of essential programs, in order to head off an adverse political reaction to the presence of a large number of Americans in relatively privileged positions.

27. Promote increasing Asian Buddhist contact with and knowledge of the Free World. Explore with friendly religious organizations ways of developing Buddhist fraternal associations and identification with Free World religious leaders and movements.

28. Continue activities designed to encourage the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia (a) to organize and activate anti-Communist groups and activities within their own communities; (b) to resist the effects of parallel pro-Communist groups and activities; (c) generally, to increase their orientation toward their local governments and toward the Free World; and (d) consistent with their obligations and primary allegiance to their local governments, to extend sympathy and support to the Chinese National Government.

29. Discreetly encourage local governments to work toward assimilation of racial minorities.

30. Implement as appropriate covert operations designed to assist in the achievement of U.S. objectives in Southeast Asia.

31. Promote economic cooperation between the countries of the area and Japan and with the Government of the Republic of China, to the extent feasible without jeopardizing the achievement of U.S. objectives toward the individual Southeast Asian countries.

32. In order to promote increased cooperation in the area and to deny the general area of the Mekong River Basin to Communist influence or domination, assist as feasible in the development of the Mekong River Basin as a nucleus for regional cooperation and mutual aid.

V. Country Courses of Action in Addition to the "Regional Courses of Action" Above

Burma

33. In view of the emerging opportunities in Burma and the repercussions that developments there will have on the uncommitted areas of Asia and Africa, make a special effort to influence an increasingly favorable orientation in Burma's policies.

34. Encourage and support those elements in Burma which can maintain a stable free government that identifies its interest with those of the Free World and resists Communist inducements, threats, and programs to subvert Burma's independence.

35. Encourage Burmese assumption of regional and international responsibilities compatible with our own objectives.

36. For political purposes, upon Burmese request make available military equipment and supplies on a loan or reimbursable basis, as consistent with U.S. interests.

37. Encourage the Burmese Government to establish internal security throughout the country, and discourage further foreign assistance to Chinese Nationalist irregulars and ethnic rebel groups in Burma.

38. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Burma, invoke the UN Charter and, subject to Burmese request for assistance, take necessary military and any other action to assist Burma if Burma is willing to resist Communist resort to force and U.S. vital interests are involved: Provided, that the taking of military action shall be subject to prior submission to and approval by the Congress.

Cambodia

39. In order to maintain Cambodia's independence and to reverse the drift toward pro-Communist neutrality, encourage individuals and groups in Cambodia who oppose dealing with the Communist bloc and who would serve to broaden the political power base in Cambodia.

40. Provide modest military aid for indigenous armed forces capable of assuring internal security.

41. Terminate economic and military aid if the Cambodian Government ceases to demonstrate a will to resist internal Communist subversion and to carry out a policy of maintaining its independence.

42. Assist where possible in solution of Cambodian-Thai border problems and in fostering good relations between Cambodia and Viet Nam.

Laos

43. Seek to strengthen the determination of the Royal Government to resist subversion and to maintain its independence.

44. In order to prevent Lao neutrality from veering toward pro-Communism, encourage individuals and groups in Laos who oppose dealing with the Communist bloc.

45. Develop an attitude of confidence on the part of Lao leaders that the UN Charter, SEATO, and U.S. support provide a favorable basis for Lao resistance to Communist pressure and inducements.

46. Encourage and support cooperation between Laos and other Southeast Asian countries, particularly Thailand, Viet Nam, the Philippines, and Burma, including such joint effort in the anti-subversion, economic, communications, and military planning fields as feasible.

47. Support the expansion and reorganization of police, propaganda, and army intelligence services, provided anti-Communist elements maintain effective control of these services.

48. Continue support of the Royal Lao Army to assure internal security and provide limited initial resistance to an attack by the Viet Minh.

49. Terminate economic and military aid if the Lao Government ceases to demonstrate a will to resist internal Communist subversion and to carry out a policy of maintaining its independence.

Thailand

50. Promote the development of a Thai leadership which is increasingly united, stable and constructive, is supported by the Thai people, and willing to continue the alignment of Thailand with the United States and the West.

[*Numbered paragraph 51 (6 lines of source text) not declassified*]

52. Provide military assistance to Thailand for support of forces sufficient:

a. To maintain internal security.

b. To present limited initial resistance to external aggression.

c. To make a modest contribution to collective defense of contiguous SEATO areas.

Continue efforts to persuade Thai officials to eliminate non-MAP supported forces which do not contribute to the above objectives.

53. Encourage and support close bonds between Thailand and Laos and between Thailand and Cambodia, including such political associations, economic cooperation, and joint military planning as will serve to draw Laos and Cambodia closer to the Free World without weakening Thailand's position with regard to the Free World.

Viet Nam

54. Assist Free Viet Nam to develop a strong, stable and constitutional government to enable Free Viet Nam to assert an increasingly attractive contrast to conditions in the present Communist zone.

55. Work toward the weakening of the Communists in North and South Viet Nam in order to bring about the eventual peaceful reunification of a free and independent Viet Nam under anti-Communist leadership.

56. Support the position of the Government of Free Viet Nam that all-Viet Nam elections may take place only after it is satisfied that genuinely free elections can be held thoughout both zones of Viet Nam.

57. Assist Free Viet Nam to build up indigenous armed forces, including independent logistical and administrative services, which will be capable of assuring internal security and of providing limited initial resistance to attack by the Viet Nam.[9]

58. Encourage Vietnamese military planning for defense against external aggression along lines consistent with U.S. planning concepts based upon U.S. policy, and discreetly manifest in other ways U.S. interest in assisting Free Viet Nam, in accordance with the SEATO Treaty, to defend itself against external aggression.

Federation of Malaya

59. Encourage the continued development of a strong, stable Malaya within the Commonwealth.

60. Encourage the Commonwealth to exercise primary responsibility in Malaya but be prepared to assist, as necessary, in the maintenance of Malaya's stability and independence.

61. In the application to Malaya of the course of action in paragraph 22–a, be prepared to provide needed technical assistance to Malaya, and consider the extension of loans for economic development if alternate sources of financing prove to be inadequate.

62. Discreetly encourage the present Malayan leadership to improve its position of strength and responsibility unless more favorable alternatives develop.

[9] On April 9, this error was corrected to read "Viet Minh".

63. Discreetly encourage Malaya's participation and membership in SEATO, avoiding any actions which might strengthen neutralist sentiment.

64. Encourage the Malayan Government to take vigorous actions to curb Communist subversion and to rely primarily on the Commonwealth for any assistance required.

65. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Malaya, place initial reliance on Commonwealth, SEATO or UN resources as appropriate, but be prepared, subject to Malayan request for assistance, to take independent U.S. action along the lines of the proviso in paragraph 19.

Singapore

66. Encourage and support the British in the exercise of their primary responsibility in Singapore; but be prepared, after consultation with the British, to take such independent action as necessary to assure the continued Free World orientation of Singapore.

67. Encourage the British and local authorities to take vigorous action to curb Communist subversion and, after consultation with the British, be prepared to complement such action, if necessary.

68. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Singapore, place initial reliance on British or Commonwealth resources and, as appropriate in accordance with paragraph 19, support SEATO or UN action; but, subject to British request for assistance, be prepared to take independent action along the lines of the proviso in paragaraph 19.

69. Support internal self-government in Singapore and incorporation in the Federation of Malaya only if consistent with maintaining Free World strategic interests in Singapore and the Federation.

VI. Supplementary Statement of Policy on the Special Situation in North Viet Nam

70. Treat the Viet Minh as not constituting a legitimate government, and discourage other non-Communist states from developing or maintaining relations with the Viet Minh regime.

71. Prevent the Viet Minh from expanding their political influence and territorial control in Free Viet Nam and Southeast Asia.

72. Deter the Viet Minh from attacking or subverting Free Viet Nam or Laos.

73. Probe weaknesses of the Viet Minh and exploit them internally and internationally whenever possible.

74. Exploit nationalist sentiment within North Viet Nam as a means of weakening and disrupting Sino-Soviet domination.

75. Assist the Government of Viet Nam to undertake programs of political, economic and psychological warfare against Viet Minh Communists.

76. Apply, as necessary to achieve U.S. objectives, restrictions on U.S. exports and shipping and on foreign assets similar to those already in effect for Communist China and North Korea.

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13. Letter From Prime Minister Macmillan to President Eisenhower[1]

London, April 18, 1958.

During my tour in the Far East[2] I was very conscious of the defense problems of the area.

On the whole, I think we are not doing too badly there. I am glad that the recent SEATO Council Meeting went off so well. It has helped, I am sure, to consolidate our alliance more firmly.

It seemed to me, however, while I was out there, that there was one gap in our approach to the defence problems of the area. I felt very strongly that there was need for the four countries which are in a position to deploy effective defence forces in the area (namely, our two countries together with Australia and New Zealand) to undertake, on a basis of complete frankness, some joint consideration of defence policy in South East Asia.

We must not, of course, do anything that might weaken SEATO. We must therefore avoid anything that would look like forming an inner circle of SEATO Powers. At the same time I think you will agree that we cannot honestly put all our cards on the table in the SEATO forum. And, if there is to be any effective military planning for that area, it must be done, unobtrusively, by the four Powers which alone can deploy effective forces in the area.

I should therefore like to suggest that without setting up any new machinery or institutions we should have frank and full discussions on what our forces are doing and can do in South East Asia. These discussions should be quite informal, and we should have to make sure that they were held so unobtrusively as to attract no attention.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204. Top Secret.

[2] Prime Minister Macmillan left London for a tour which included visits to Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. He returned to London on February 14.

If you feel able to agree to this situation, I will ask Harold Caccia, as a first step, to take the matter up with the State Department and the Pentagon in order to find out their ideas as to where and how the discussions should take place, and what subjects could most usefully be studied.[3]

[3] Printed from an unsigned copy. Secretary Dulles discussed this letter, among other topics, with President Eisenhower on April 23. His memorandum describing this part of the conversation reads:

"I said that this was a matter of some delicacy because it was in a way covered by the ANZUS Treaty and talks thereunder, and Australia and New Zealand had historically been rather anxious to keep this a three-power arrangement rather than four-power. I recalled the history of that Treaty (which I had negotiated) and Churchill's criticism of the Labor Government for having permitted Australia and New Zealand to make an independent arrangement with the US. The President thought that the best line of reply might be to ask Macmillan whether the approach he suggested had been cleared with Australia and New Zealand. I said I had not yet had an opportunity to talk to Secretary Walter Robertson about this and would like to get his judgment before the President replied." (Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, Meetings with the President)

14. Letter From President Eisenhower to the Prime Minister Macmillan[1]

Washington, April 24, 1958.

DEAR HAROLD: I have your letter of April eighteenth, suggesting, as I understand it, military planning by the two of us plus Australia and New Zealand with reference to Southeast Asia. I certainly see no objection to this provided it can be done, as you say, unobtrusively and in a way which will not run the risk of undermining SEATO and alienating the Asian members. However, it does seem to me that before there can be any very useful military talks, there is need for political discussion. I think this perhaps should occur in the first instance between our two countries. I wonder whether this could not be one of the matters we talk about when you are to be here in early June?[2]

The rebellion in Sumatra seems to have flattened out so that the problem there, while certainly as grave as ever, does not have the same time factor that seemed at one time to be the case.

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, International File. Top Secret. Dulles prepared a draft of this letter and sent it to Eisenhower with a covering note dated April 24. The draft was cleared by Walter S. Robertson. (*Ibid.*, Dulles Papers, White House Correspondence)

[2] Macmillan visted Washington June 7–11.

If you want Caccia to have some talks with Foster about this before you come over, I would see no objection. However, I must repeat my opinion that four-power military planning, in advance of political decisions by them, would incur more risk than advantage.[3]

Incidentally, Foster has the impression, derived from the SEATO meeting, that Prime Minister Nash of New Zealand is much less disposed than was his predecessor to vigorous action that could have military implications.[4]

With warm regard,

As ever

Ike

[3] This sentence was rewritten by Eisenhower. As drafted by Dulles it read: "However, I think that four-power military planning at this stage carries more risks than advantages at least in advance of political decisions." (Draft with alterations in Eisenhower's handwriting in Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Dulles–Herter Series)

[4] In a reply dated May 15, Macmillan wrote: "Thank you for your letter of April 24 about the defence problems of South-East Asia. I readily accept your point about the need for political discussion before military planning is undertaken, and I agree it would be useful if this were one of the subjects for discussion between us when we meet in June." (*Ibid.*, Dulles Papers, White House Correspondence.)

15. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, June 9, 1958[1]

MC 7

SUBJECT

Interdependence: US/UK Relationship

PARTICIPANTS

United States	*United Kingdom*
The President	The Prime Minister
The Secretary	Ambassador Caccia
Mr. Reinhardt	Sir Norman Brook
Mr. Elbrick	Sir Patrick Dean
General Goodpaster	Mr. Frederick Bishop[2]
Mr. Dale	

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, International File. Top Secret. Drafted by William N. Dale and cleared on June 10 by C. Burke Elbrick, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

[2] Those officials not otherwise identified are Sir Norman Brook, Secretary of the British Cabinet; Sir Patrick Dean, Deputy Under Secretary of State in the Foreign Office; and Frederick Bishop, Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.

[*1 paragraph (5½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

Referring to the Lebanon situation, the Prime Minister said that on the military side our cooperation has gone well and he hoped that the liaison between our two staffs in London and with Admiral Holloway (CINCNELM) may be continued so that we may take action on short notice as required.

With respect to Southeast Asia, the Prime Minister said that four countries (Australia and New Zealand in addition to the US and UK) could make contributions. He believed that we should find out now how all four can operate as a joint force if something should break out in that area, who would command, and, how operations would be conducted.

The President suggested that the Philippines might be disposed to contribute and the Secretary said that the ROK and Nationalist Chinese would also. The Secretary noted that both have been anxious to get into the Indonesian affair but imagined that the kind of coordination which the Prime Minister mentioned should be among only the Anglo-Saxon countries.

The President stated his belief that Anglo-American cooperation should be as nearly complete as it can be made even though it cannot always be publicly admitted and the US must sometimes appear somewhat disinterested. He commended the working groups saying that they are "doing beautiful work and I want to keep them healthy and strong".

The Secretary, returning to the subject of defense of Southeast Asia, said that we should do some political thinking before we get too far along with the military work and suggested that this subject be discussed in more detail tomorrow. The President pointed out that the main question is how to get Australia and New Zealand included in our defense planning there. The Prime Minister said that both countries are happy to have the UK open discussions on this subject on their behalf.

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16. Editorial Note

On September 12, Under Secretary Dillon and other U.S. officials discussed economic development in Southeast Asia with a Japanese group headed by Foreign Minister Achiro Fujiyama, then visiting Washington. (Memorandum of conversation dated September 15 by Louis E. Gleeck, Jr.; Department of State, Conference Files, Lot 63 D 123, CF 1130)

Dillon discussed Asian development further with Japanese representatives during the Colombo Plan meeting in Seattle on November 11. (Secto 6 from Seattle, November 13; *ibid.*, Central Files, 890.00/11–1358)

Both documents are included in the microfiche supplement.

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17. Memorandum From the Secretary of State to the President[1]

Washington, September 13, 1958.

SUBJECT

Your Attendance at the Colombo Plan Conference in Seattle on November 10[2]

In our recent discussion of the forthcoming Colombo Plan Conference I indicated the desirability of your addressing the opening session as the head of the host government has traditionally done. The United States enjoys much good will in the Colombo Plan group. It is most important that we nourish it. Your appearance would make a profound impression on all Colombo Plan members.

My thinking on the nature of your address would contemplate a major emphasis on the importance we attach to the Colombo Plan, on our desire to make full use of its activities in the formulation of our own aid plans. It is an admirable instrument through which to seek some of our objectives in the area. Since the organization is composed exclusively of free world countries, antedates the Communist economic offensive, is highly esteemed by the Asian people and looked upon as their own institution it should be possible to strengthen this association of Asian countries with the rest of the free world through the Colombo Plan.

Although most aid officially cited under the Colombo Plan has come from the United States (about 85% or over $3 billion since 1951) recipient countries rarely relate what they obtain from the United States to the Colombo Plan. We might rectify this situation by emphasizing our intention to take into account the substantive discussions of economic development issues during the meetings in formulating our aid programs for the area. Toward this end we might encourage more joint effort to identify common economic development problems and more review of current bilateral aid programs. Emphasizing our desire

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Dulles–Herter Series. Confidential.
[2] Held November 10–13.

to strengthen this regional association should more firmly establish in Asian eyes our posture of partnership with them in their economic development efforts.

In my General Assembly speech next week[3] I intend to encourage all members to consider what they could do to assist the process of economic growth in the less developed areas and to report their plans to the United Nations. This is very similar to what is done annually under the Colombo Plan among its members. I shall list in this speech the major steps which the United States would be prepared to take or support during the coming year, e.g., 1) to support expanded capital for the IBRD and the IMF, 2) to marshall scientific resources in efforts to solve scientific problems bearing heavily on the less developed countries, 3) to join in supporting, as you announced to the recent Emergency Special Session, regional development institutions desired and supported by the governments of the areas concerned, 4) to support an International Development Association if it appeared likely to receive general support, etc.

I don't believe we could find a better forum than the Colombo Plan, concerned as it is exclusively with problems of peaceful economic development, in which to elaborate on what will have been put before the General Assembly, particularly as it relates to the activities under the Colombo Plan or to our Far Eastern policies and programs generally. Any statement made by you in Seattle will reach a large audience.

I suggest that for the purpose of shaping these ideas into most effective speech form you may again wish to call on the services of C.D. Jackson.[4]

JFD

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[3] For text of the Secretary's speech delivered in New York on September 18 before the opening session of the 13th U.N. General Assembly, see Department of State *Bulletin*, October 6, 1958, p. 525.

[4] Special Assistant to President Eisenhower, 1953–1954, C.D. Jackson functioned thereafter as an occasional special adviser to the administration.

Dulles and Eisenhower discussed this proposal on October 2 and Eisenhower agreed, if Dulles could provide him with an appropriate address. (Memorandum of conversation by Dulles; Department of State, Central Files, 890.00/10–658)

18. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, September 27, 1958—2 p.m.

401. Reference my G–40,[2] Department telegram 216,[3] and memorandum conversation Kellogg with Australian Minister Stuart, dated August 12, Part 3.[4]

I have just received from Stuart extract memorandum conversation Sihanouk with Plimsoll, Assistant Secretary Australian Department External Affairs, dated March 21, 1956.[5] Memorandum makes clear that Sihanouk stated specifically he "not anti-SEATO" and that if Cambodia were attacked by Communists "Sihanouk hoped Cambodia would have SEATO help." Sihanouk and Plimsoll agreed that if SEATO did not make statements re importance SEATO protection to Cambodia, Cambodia would not attack SEATO, and that "less said by either side the better."

On September 24 Cambodian National Radio broadcast "editorial" attacking Thailand calls Thai government "puppets entirely sold to foreign imperialists which are carrying on ridiculous anti-Communist campaign." Editorial then refers to foreign imperialists as "undertaking their policy of war in Asia under form of SEATO." While I still agree probably undesirable to raise question SEATO with Sihanouk, above information supplied in case matter is raised either with Prince or Son Sann.[6]

Strom

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2758. Confidential. Repeated to Bangkok.

[2] Included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] Not printed.

[4] Not found.

[5] Transmitted to the Department as the attachment to despatch 113 from Phnom Penh, September 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2958)

[6] Governor of the National Bank of Cambodia.

19. U.S. Minutes of the ANZUS Council Meeting, Department of State, Washington, October 1, 1958, 10:05 a.m.–5:55 p.m.[1]

ANZ MC–1

[Here follow a list of persons present (24) and discussion of the situation in the Taiwan Straits, the Middle East, Japan, and Indonesia.]

Minister Casey: The military aspects of SEATO, I don't know whether you propose to take that up now with the Military Advisers speaking?

Secretary Dulles: I thought we might ask our Military Advisers to say something about that. Prior to that, however, I would just like to ask Mr. Allen Dulles to comment, if he felt like it, as to what we said just before his coming into the room. Allen, Mr. Casey was saying he felt rather discouraged at the lack of cooperation of the Asian members of SEATO in any effort to deal with the Communist subversive activities. Apparently in efforts being made at these meetings, we are the ones to make all sorts of suggestions, and they sit there and listen, but you can't get any really effective response. Do you share that view?

Mr. Allen Dulles: I think one of the reasons for that is the problem of security. None of these nations—we are speaking about the Southeast Asian nations—have any real security in their counter-subversive apparatuses. They are probably all penetrated. I believe they all know that they are all penetrated, and therefore each probably is ascribing even worse things to his neighbor, is not willing to do much talking in any body about their own efforts against the Communists, to go very far even in identifying Communists, and I think that is one of the great difficulties and it is a very real difficulty, because they are afraid that if there is any common plan that is worked out, that plan will become generally known to the Communists and be frustrated. And it worries us, I think it worries the British, and I think it worries you both also, because that is a very real situation, and you know there has been somewhat the same difficulty in that there is a Committee in NATO, and even though the security of NATO is a great deal better than the security in Southeast Asia, there has been a great reluctance on the part of the security services to come clean and to get together with the others in any common planning with respect to Communism for fear that that will leak out.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 1128. Top Secret; Limit Distribution. Attached to a covering note dated November 3 by Dudley Miller of the Reports and Operations Staff. The portion printed here is from the afternoon session which began at 2:25 p.m. The full text of the minutes is included in the microfiche supplement.

I have just come back from Europe, and I have discussed that matter with several of the security services of the NATO countries. Now that doesn't go necessarily to the heart of the matter, but that is one of the reasons, I think, why anything in the nature of a secret or covert plan to combat Communism probably cannot be surfaced in an organization like SEATO or even in NATO. There probably are certain areas where one can operate in the more overt areas, where it doesn't make much difference whether it is known or not, and where more can be done, and I think that ought to be more thoroughly explored.

Secretary Dulles: We might have a report from the Military Advisers at this time, if it is agreeable.

Prime Minister Nash: There is one other menacing danger associated with what Allen Dulles has said, what he has had to say, that it might be people with Communist background that are good character people, as you think, and talk with them, but they might have a loyalty to the Communist philosophy that would enable them or urge them almost to make sure that that wings to other countries, and that is probably one of the most menacing features of your own economy. Who can you trust? Some people say you can't trust a Communist anyhow. I wouldn't want to trust them with anything that I knew might be useful to somebody else outside. That is where the danger lies.

Minister Casey: Does what Mr. Allen Dulles says point to more bilateralism in anti-subversive work?

Mr. Allen Dulles: Yes, it does.

Minister Casey: You and the Thais and other people. I imagine that has not been overlooked.

Mr. Allen Dulles: No; that has not been overlooked and you both can play a more useful role and you both have been very helpful, I think, Mr. Casey, and more of that can be done. We try to help them develop organizations in this field that are reasonably effective to try to teach them security. The British are doing quite a good deal of the same type of work, and that, I think, can be effective.

Prime Minister Nash: I wouldn't say you could talk in SEATO the same as you can talk in here. You can't in SEATO.

Minister Casey: We haven't been penetrated yet.

Prime Minister Nash: It is too difficult.

(Laughter)

Start Top Secret

Secretary Dulles: Shall we hear from the General? General Wells.

Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Wells:[2] Mr. Secretary, since the Military Planning Office of SEATO was formed in February of 1957, a great deal of

[2] Chairman of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

useful spade work has been done on a planning basis. The latest edition of that work was in the logistics study[3] of the forces that could be maintained in the Southeast Asian area through the existing ports and airports which are strictly limited in that area and both rather vulnerable too. This work was taken [to?] quite a stage by the planners on the spot, and it is being followed up when the meeting agreed with the suggestion of Admiral Felt's that it was time now to put in a working party of logistical experts with which the planners can coordinate their work and arrive at more definite determination of the actual capacity of the forces, air and land, that could be employed in that area and maintained.

This planning office, as the Prime Minister of New Zealand has said, is now functioning more smoothly and more efficiently since the arrival of the New Zealand appointment of the Chief Planning Officer, Brigadier Thornton, who is a high-grade officer with a lot of experience in planning in both peace and war, and under him the team has settled down contentedly, and I am certain the results being obtained now are better than we have been able to obtain in the past. And I would think that as a forecast we could say that that little planning team will now give us the full value of which it is capable within the limitations which are inseparable from the SEATO organization and one of which has been so clearly indicated just previously by Mr. Allen Dulles.

Today also the specific discussions are getting under way in Honolulu, where our planners are meeting for the first time there and they have got a program which they plan to take a week to complete.[4] The three most important subjects that were listed in the directive, that was the agreement between the countries, are being taken first in this week, [*3 lines of source text not declassified*]. They are also dealing with the question of the support for SEATO in both a cold and a limited war operation in Southeast Asia, and finally studying the logistic and base requirements in the Southeast Asian area, and that of course is on the next plane from the one that was dealt with in the SEATO planning office.

I would like to point out without those examinations to guide the member nations in the SEATO area, it is really difficult for national authorities to plan the force requirements and logistical requirements adequately. Each nation does need to know the extent to which it has to provide its own national logistical requirements or the extent to which it can depend upon a common logistical supply arranged by SEATO. Also whether it will be able to use the amphibious capability

[3] Not further identified.

[4] Reference is to four-power talks among military planners from the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

of another power, such as we did in 1939-45. Studies of those natures, I think, should provide a sound agreement on which the future development of the separate forces of each member can be based. And also those studies should supply and fill many of the gaps that so far SEATO planning has been unable to fill and does not look like filling.

I would like to say here a word on the military side of ANZUS as well. With this new organization making these studies in this area, which is the one of the four-country organization, it does mean that much of the military studies of ANZUS now go into that other forum, and there will be very little in the way of military studies left for the military representatives of ANZUS to undertake. That is not material. But what is most material is that we do not lose this close, intimate, and high-level contact that we have on the military level in ANZUS, and we would urge that we continue to have them, and in the meeting in Honolulu we agreed, they should press this point that we should agree to maintain the military level, even though there is not much work to do, and to maintain those close links of the same intimate contact, so that it is always available to us, and that it is not replaced by the other planning that we are doing, and so that in the event of an ANZUS emergency the arrangements ought to be able to function smoothly. Therefore we agree that we should continue on the same military basis as we have in the past in this ANZUS forum.

Maj. Gen. Weir:[5] I have got nothing further to add to what General Wells has said on SEATO except to endorse his last remark on our agreement on the ANZUS military level, that we would like to preserve that military relationship, intimate relationship which we have developed over the last five or six years.

[*1 paragraph (2½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

Secretary Dulles: Admiral Felt.

Admiral Felt: I would like to add one thing, Mr. Secretary. One of the Military Advisers, Admiral Choudri[6] made quite a point at the last SEATO Military Advisers meeting[7] that we should plan in the framework of global, possibly nuclear war, and he didn't get very far with it. He was a one-man party. But it is indicative of how they are thinking. I just wanted to mention this so that you would be alert to this. It might come up in Wellington at the next Council meeting.[8]

Do you want to add anything to that, General Wells?

Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Wells: No.

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[5] Major General Cyril E. Weir, Chief of the New Zealand General Staff.

[6] Of Pakistan.

[7] The Ninth SEATO Military Advisers Meeting was held in Bangkok September 16–18.

[8] Scheduled to be held in Wellington April 8–10, 1959.

Secretary Dulles: I think it might be interesting, while it isn't directly relevant to ANZUS or SEATO, if you care to take just a minute or two to state to us what is the military power which we now have in the Taiwan area.

Admiral Felt: In the Taiwan area?

Secretary Dulles: Yes.

Admiral Felt: Well, we have had quite an augmentation of United States military power in the past month. As you know, the backbone of our deterrent power in the Western Pacific has been the Pacific Fleet, the Seventh Fleet specifically. That Fleet was augmented by a carrier being sent from the Sixth Fleet through the Suez and around to the Pacific. At one point we had as many as five carriers out and actually in the needed area, so we will be able to maintain four in another month or so. There was considerable Air Force augmentation of interceptors and fighter bombers, and a squadron of C–47's and associated air lift, to the point now where we have what you might call a tremendous force out there, able to engage in war with conventional weapons while at the same time maintaining a readiness to engage in atomic war at short notice.

Secretary Dulles: I thought it was interesting and in fact quite relevant in indicating the capacity which we have to mobilize very great power fairly quickly out there.

Admiral Felt: As one example, a squadron of F–86's moved from Okinawa down to Taiwan in four and a half hours after the word "Go." The squadron of F–104's, the fastest airplane in the world, moved out in air transports and with their crews and all the air transport, and they were flying within a matter of four or five hours after arrival in Taiwan. It was a remarkable exhibition.

Minister Casey: In the talks that are going on, I think, or just going to begin in Pearl Harbor on a four-power basis, I understand amongst or in the agenda there is not at present a reference to any study of the military significance of an Indonesian attack on Western New Guinea. Would that be a matter that could be either added to this agenda, if it is not too late in the day, or a matter for discussion at some future seminars or conference? I don't know whether that should be under SEATO or ANZUS.

Admiral Felt: Before the Military Planners could take that up, they would have to have some political policy guidance as to some of the assumptions, and this perhaps is the body to give it to us. One of the troubles with Plan Number Four before it was overtaken by events was that the assumptions do not obtain in the light of present-day conditions.

Prime Minister Nash: I just wonder if we could obtain any comments from those who are competent to make them with regard to transport of men and equipment from one point to another. You men-

tioned one from Okinawa to Taiwan. Suppose we had sort of small commitments, and it came to that, and we had no facilities for transferring them from where they were to where they were required.

Minister Casey: Air transport?

Prime Minister Nash: No, not necessarily. Not only air. First of all, the discussions that we have had, whether they were right or wrong, would suggest that there was no chance of safely transferring thousands by sea, by surface ships. There might be a fairly good chance of transferring the men and ultimately finding ways of making the equipment available by air. I wonder if the Admiral could give us some idea with regard to the truth of the statement? Is it just physically impossible to safely transfer men in thousands, one, two, five, ten, twenty to thirty thousand, into a given area by sea?

Admiral Felt: I can't imagine where that statement came from, Mr. Prime Minister. There are two parts to it. One is transport and the other is safety. I don't know where the emphasis might be put.

Prime Minister Nash: Transport is no good unless it is safe.

Admiral Felt: Then there are two aspects we need to consider. Are we transporting troops to be landed ashore in combat, or are we merely making an administrative lift. During the last war, now, there were thousands and thousands and thousands of soldiers who moved in troop ships by administrative lifts.

Prime Minister Nash: Yes.

Admiral Felt: On the other hand, fighting the Battle of the Islands, that was done with troops loaded to land ashore in combat. That is an entirely different thing. Now, the amphibious lift available to take troops and land them ashore in combat is limited. But the world shipping capacity is very, very large, and you must have quite a bit of your own merchant shipping, all of which could be converted to troop ships quite readily. But it depends on what we are talking about, Mr. Nash.

Prime Minister Nash: We have got no other than troop ships and some passenger ships that could be so used, but the general feeling is that it seems an unlikely transaction for it to be completely associated with the transfer of thousands of men by surface to an area where they might be most properly and usefully employed. You see, we had a commitment under certain circumstances, shall we say, to transfer 23,000 men. Now the statements that have been made, whether rightly or wrongly, I don't know—I take more notice of what you say than what the other parties said—they said it is just physically impossible to transfer those men safely under present conditions irrespective of what happened in 1939.

Ambassador Beale:[9] You mean because of the modern submarine?

Prime Minister Nash: Yes. That is what we wanted to do. Because there may be other means of transporting, transferring them. That is what we ought to know. But the statement with regard to the ships and men was that it looked—if there is affirmation—there is a lot of affirmation nowadays, if affirmation means anything—it was that it was impossible as an operation.

Admiral Felt: If we are putting the emphasis on safety—

Prime Minister Nash: Safety.

Admiral Felt: And we are talking about the submarine menace, it is thoroughly recognized that this menace of the Soviet and Chinese Communist submarine fleet is great. However, so are our antisubmarine capabilities. Here again it is not a hopeless thing. Antisubmarine warfare is a war of attrition. Now in any given convoy situation, dependent upon the situation in other areas, adequate protection can be given for convoys. By "adequate" I don't mean that that convoy will get through unscathed. As you know, we lost an awful lot of ships in the Atlantic in World War II and almost lost that war until we got command of the situation. If we are talking in terms of a limited war down in your area of the world—

Prime Minister Nash: No, no. It would not be a limited war, unless you mean Southeast Asia is our area. It is not very likely to be much down our way.

Admiral Felt: You are making a contribution to a limited war.

Prime Minister Nash: To the north and to the east.

Admiral Felt: That would be a limited war, and so far—

Prime Minister Nash: Yes; for the time being.

Admiral Felt: So far we have had no submarine operation in a limited war. I would believe that if the Russians started to use their submarines in any kind of a war, we would get in then and we would be on the way to expanding it into a bigger war. Would you assess it like that, Mr. Secretary? In Korea, you remember, there was no submarine action whatsoever.

Prime Minister Nash: No.

Ambassador Beale: But if the Soviet were to loan its Soviet submarines to Soviet-trained Chinese Communists operating submarines actively in that area, would you still say we were on our way to a general war?

Secretary Dulles: I would think we would be on our way to a bigger war, yes.

Ambassador Beale: I can see that; yes.

[9] Howard Beale, Australian Ambassador to the United States.

Secretary Dulles: Whether it is general war in the sense that it would involve an exchange of nuclear weapons between the Soviet Union and the United States, I don't think it necessarily follows. We would have a much more extended war, I believe, in the Far East than we have now, and without its necessarily leading to the other thing.

Prime Minister Nash: There are two pictures there, really. The really limited, normal war, insofar as you can limit it, the growth of it, both of the major parties, or two or three of them, are inclined to keep it to a local war, from being a global war. That is a certainly different picture to what a global war would be.

The transport facilities that I was thinking of for the moment, and I hope you are not giving too much time to our little country, would be facilities necessary to take those that are likely to be affected to a given area, to go to an area where they would be useful to fight in limited numbers. If the global war circumstances come, we would want to have ten times as many, perhaps more than that. At that point is the evidence available today such as to think that the possible carrying by surface ships is likely to be sound and safe? Or would it be better to think in terms of air traffic? It does not mean the air is always safe. It does not mean that at all. It might mean that the quickness of the handling or facilities to handle might take them to places where they wouldn't be able to have landing. There would not be any ports. It is those two things that I would like to see, if there is something that would enable us to think differently. We are very small. You have to watch that. We would be likely to be the farthest away.

Admiral Felt: I could make this comment. In terms of the New Zealand-Australian-U.K. Navy contributions to the defense in the area, we would like to think that the effort is being put into antisubmarine warfare, and those navies have considerable capability if they get the necessary budgetary support to buy the modern equipment that they need.

I might make another comment: That surface transport is by far the cheapest and best way to transport bulk—that includes lots of men. Air transport is by far the most efficient transport of perishables and items that are urgently needed. It is necessary to have both. And if New Zealand is going to make a contribution of troops in any limited war situation, I think we should definitely plan to provide safe transport by surface certainly.

Minister Casey: Have you come to the end of the military?

Secretary Dulles: I thought we were approaching the end of that.

Minister Casey: I wonder if we would have Air Marshal Scherger have a word on that?

Air Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger:[10] Perhaps I should stand to make myself seen and heard, sir.

One of our most pressing problems is to find airplanes with which we can replace our present operation infantry. If we want them and buy them in small numbers, we buy them from the manufacturing country, as we have with transports. We have bought the C–130, as with maritime antisubmarine we have bought the P2V5, and I hope we will have some P2V7. But our real difficulty is with the airplane which is now designed as the technical [*tactical*?] fighter. The Tactical Air Command here use extremely big airplanes; they are complex, they are sophisticated, and they are tremendously expensive both in cost and in the ground environment you need from which to operate them effectively. Both the airfield's length and the strength of the airfield is such that in the Southeast Asian theater there are about five airfields from which they can operate. And if you add Admiral Felt's four carriers, that makes nine. But it still leaves the opponent with a fairly easy problem, and we have been desperately seeking a small, versatile airplane which can range over the whole area and which can operate from the thousand and one 6000-foot strips left over from the last war and which still are there and from which commercial airplanes are still operating.

We believe we have found the airplane in a project which has been raised and was having a little difficulty here, the Northrop–156, which is a development of the T–38 supersonic trainer. It is a light airplane and can have a lot of sophistication in it, but we don't want a lot of sophistication. We want it in a fairly cheap and uncomplicated form. It is the kind of thing we can build and build relatively cheaply, and it is the kind of airplane which could be used right throughout that area, where we ourselves are perhaps the most capable in the use of modern equipment. But we know that the Filipinos and Thais and the Pakistanis are having more than a little trouble in operating the F–86's. They can fly them all right, but even they require a fairly good airfield, and their ferry range isn't all that much. We want an airplane that can go across Australia and from the top end of Australia, across the Philippines, up to Singapore.

I found the philosophy in airplanes here is to build a single-seater airplane which costs over two million dollars a copy, which demands, if you are going to make it mobile, in-air refueling capabilities, which we can't afford, and which requires an eight-to-eleven thousand foot runway. That kind of airplane is beyond our capabilities.

We find ourselves approaching now the time when it looks as though we are going to be priced out of being able to buy airplanes with which we can suitably arm ourselves. It is a fairly disturbing

[10] Chief of Staff, Royal Australian Air Force.

proposition, sir. And it is one which I thought perhaps, and Mr. Casey agreed, should be aired here, because it is the kind of military problem which I believe ANZUS could solve and I believe should solve. We are willing to build it, we are willing to operate it, and we are very willing to supply it, if we can manufacture it, to the whole SEATO area, if they can afford to buy it and if arrangements can be made for them to get them and use them. That is our problem, sir: How to get the airplane and where to get it—where to get it, rather than how to get it. Europe has nothing. The small NATO fighter which has been proposed to me, the F–91, is just like the Australian boomerang. It is never out of sight. It won't go far enough. You have these F–105 airplanes, which are over $2,000,000 a copy. Even if we could afford them or build them in sufficient numbers, we couldn't afford to operate them.

The same applies to the naval tactical fighter, the thing that carries ordinary, or shall I call them conventional bombs. I don't know why these airplanes are so complex and so sophisticated unless perhaps it is that they are all designed around a nuclear capacity, which of course we don't possess. We have to base whatever we have on a conventional capacity. I think that is it.

Secretary Dulles: Do you want a reply?

Mr. Irwin: Marshal Scherger brings up a very difficult type of air operation which has been under consideration by the Pentagon for some time in connection with the Northrop F–156 aircraft. I am not completely up to date as to what the current status of the studies are on it, Air Marshal. We had thought of it at one time in connection with NATO and the European countries as well as in the Far East and the Pacific. From the point of view of assisting and financing the manufacture and sale of the planes, the question really revolved around finding a market for it after you had gone all through the expense of development and production in large enough quantities to justify the expense. It was thought at one time that Germany might be interested in the N–156, and possibly Japan. Japan has decided against it and went to Grumman, I believe. Germany also appeared to have rejected it, although I am not sure whether that is completely final or not. So the problem is, if it were available, it is still on the drafting board or has not even been produced in prototype. The question really is, by the time you produce it, is it an adequate airplane for the period of 1961–1962, the period that it is coming in? There is question about it in Europe, and I think there is also considerable question, at least as far as Japan and that part of the Far East area goes. There is undoubtedly a need for a less-sophisticated aircraft that can meet the problem. Of course, you run into the question, then, as to the control of the air. It would be useless in an area when you are facing a MIG–17 or MIG–19, although obviously you aren't going to have a big MIG–17 or MIG–19 everywhere you are going to need another airplane. It poses a

great problem of financing as well as the tactical application of it. I think the Air Marshal is coming over to the Pentagon tomorrow, I understand.

Air Marshal Sir Fredrick Scherger: That is right; yes.

Ambassador Beale: Mr. Secretary, could I supplement what Air Marshal Scherger said. This is quite a serious problem for Australia. We have got a first-class aircraft industry in the country. We have a profound political and military necessity for maintaining that aircraft industry in Australia. It is in danger of languishing because we just haven't got aircraft to make and we can't plan ahead. A year or two ago we made a decision to buy and probably also to build to sell the F–104, but when a mission came over here,[11] we were, I think, very rightly told, "Don't be silly. Don't build that one. It is far too sophisticated for you. If that type of aircraft has to be used in a war which you are planning to participate in, we in the United States will be there with that aircraft." And quite rightly we would have made a great mistake to build the F–104. And we were also told at the same time, "Why not have a look at the Northrop and one or two others?" This was on the technical level.

The minister in charge of aircraft at the time we were agonizing over this agreed. Now we are told by our air force advisers that this is the type of plane which will suit Australia's needs. It is not yet, as you say, Mr. Irwin, quite off the drawing board. I think something like one dozen prototypes ought to be made and flown and tested before anybody can say for sure that it is the aircraft. Now what I think the Air Marshal has said is, will the United States give some consideration to making the funds available to take that airplane up to that stage, because if it proves itself I think it is pretty likely, I think it is certain that the Air Force would be advising the Australian Cabinet that "This is the airplane we want and this is the airplane we should build in Australia." I think New Zealand might become interested in the same sort of aircraft, because it has a characteristic to suit our particular needs. And if we can't get that one or something very like it, we just have nowhere else to turn for another one to build. We were told to build the Sabres for another year or two or three more. But in the meantime we have a real fight, we have a real professional difficulty in making up our mind as to what type of aircraft it should be.

Mr. Irwin: We have maintained at least to date going ahead on the N–156, trying to resolve this question or problem, but in large measure, it comes down to the financial problem with us, because it is financed by military assistance funds. The question is whether or not if you finance it through the ultimate to have enough prototypes to

[11] Apparent reference to a group headed by Sir Philip McBride, then Australian Minister of Defense, which visited Washington in late May and early June 1957.

decide whether it is worth going ahead, are you going to have enough customers to justify the research and development and production of it when you have diminishing military assistance side to keep it up. [*sic*] They cut the program three hundred million dollars this past year, and we anticipate this next year it will be more difficult.

We have a great many calls on the program throughout the world. We are going to have the situation with Taiwan, and Taiwan has eaten into the program a great deal more than the normal expectancy would have been if there had not been the Taiwan crisis, because equipment had to go to the Chinese Nationalists because of the ammunition situation, etc. So you have a choice of not only do you have a question as to the people that actually would buy this airplane in the time frame of the early 1960's but you have also the question of priority of the use of the military assistance funds over these few years until there would be production. So it presents a grave complication that the enthusiasm for the airplane itself has to date not been sufficient to justify final decision to go ahead with it.

Minister Casey: So far as the United States is concerned.

Mr. Irwin: The most likely customers had seemed to be Japan and Germany.

Minister Casey: If these aircraft were brought to the prototype stage, isn't it likely that you would have potential customers in the Asian-SEATO partners in the smaller countries, and it would suit Australia and New Zealand, and there would be more generalized use than your highly-specialized aircraft now.

Mr. Irwin: That seems to be a possibility.

Minister Casey: I think the Air Marshal is seeing Mr. Quarles and Mr. Douglas tomorrow.

Mr. Irwin: I would suggest he also speak to our MAP people.

Minister Casey: I think that is worth raising.

Secretary Dulles: Yes.

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

Military Planning

Major General Weir: I am sorry, sir, am I breaking in? It was just before we closed, on the item of Indonesia, sir, on behalf of the Military Representatives, to ask the Council to take note of that study which had been done by the ANZUS planners in March about the circumstances which you have just described and which have been very largely overtaken by events. As General Wells has mentioned, the matter is being restudied at Pearl Harbor this week under the four-power council.

Minister Casey: It was a point, Mr. Secretary, that I brought up before, the suggestion that we might ask the military planners, the four-power, I suggest, planners at Pearl Harbor, to take on a study of

the implications of an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea. That would be a study at the planners level and without any implication that governments—

Secretary Dulles: I would like to defer giving an actual political decision on that matter until I have had a chance to talk it over a little bit more with Mr. Robertson and with our military people.

Minister Casey: Could I mention that to the British, the fact that I have made this suggestion to you?

Secretary Dulles: Yes. I don't think that there is any reason why the British should not be kept fully abreast of any of our discussions here.

Minister Casey: Because if it is a four-power thing, they will in due course be informed anyway.

Prime Minister Nash: Do you feel it necessary to get the best out of the area from the protective, democratic point of view? Then we ought to get the British in. If they don't know what you are doing, and we don't know what they are doing, then we are in a bad spot.

Secretary Dulles: They would play quite a role. In fact they did play quite a role in cooperation with us before.

Minister Casey: Could I just mention one other subject in just two words, a very bad subject, disarmament, merely to ask, to say that we would be very happy to be kept informed of the progress of negotiations on disarmament that have been going through your mind.

Secretary Dulles: Well, that will not overwork you or us. (Laughter)

I just saw a brief flash report which came in on the note we received from Moscow today on this meeting planned for the 31st of October on suspension of testing, which said everything had been agreed to except the level of the meeting, and that they insist now that there should be a Foreign Ministers meeting.

Minister Casey: Could I repeat a thing, sir, that I said last year: That is, that if at any time you in the United States have in mind that you would like to have any bases or depots on Australian soil, I hope you will be not in any way inhibited in bringing it up to us, and the use of Woomera.

Mr. Irwin: We appreciated that very much at the time we sent the technical mission. [12]

Minister Casey: The use of Woomera.

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[12] A U.S. technical mission spent most of October 1957 in Australia. A brief description of its activities is contained in despatch 186 from Canberra, November 12, 1957. (Department of State, Central Files, 743.5-MSP/11-1257) Further details concerning implementation of its recommendations are in ANZ B-3/51, September 26, 1958, a background paper prepared for the October 1 ANZUS Meeting. (*Ibid.*, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 1128)

Ambassador Beale: We can guarantee 365 days of visibility. That is better than you can do at Cape Canaveral.

Mr. Irwin: All the distances, once you start from South Australia and moving northwesterly—

Minister Casey: And we have now got, as you know, Christmas Island.

Ambassador Beale: We are developing the intermediates with the British, and I think there is some American interest in it, but there it is. [13]

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

[13] For text of the communiqué of this meeting, see Department of State *Bulletin*, October 20, 1958, p. 612.

According to a memorandum of a telephone conversation between Dulles and President Eisenhower at 6:02 p.m., the Secretary commented on the meeting as follows: "The Sec called right back to say they finished the ANZUS meeting—he said it was a good meeting. Nash is a bit wobbly but we have a good communiqué backing our position in Taiwan, Quemoy and Matsu. Nash came from NZ and Casey also. The Sec said they relieved the Pres of social obligations—they were willing to do it on an informal basis." (Notes by Phyllis D. Bernau; Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations with the President)

20. Telegram From the Consulate General in Geneva to the Department of State [1]

Geneva, October 15, 1958—3 p.m.

386. From Dillon. [2] Re Deptel 504. [3] Feel substance President's speech outlined reftel is satisfactory as far as it goes, although would prefer no reference in President's speech to specific year 1959. If practicable would recommend additional point which could well be key item of speech as far as Colombo Plan countries concerned. This would be statement that US prepared work closely with Colombo Plan and designate substantially greater portions of our aid as Colombo Plan assistance. This would serve reduce pressures from Japan for creation special Southeast Asia regional development institution and

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 890.00/10–1558. Confidential.

[2] Under Secretary Dillon left Washington on September 19 to study the Mutual Security Program and economic problems in 11 nations.

[3] In telegram 504, October 14, the Department sent Dillon a summary of the President's speech scheduled for delivery at the Colombo Plan meeting in Seattle on November 10. The draft listed steps the United States was prepared to take in 1959, emphasizing a substantial increase in DLF financing. (Department of State, Central Files, 890.00/10–1458)

would I think be generally welcomed by countries of area. At same time it would allow us continue our bilateral programs while giving us means of coordinating them more closely with UK and Canadian assistance.[4]

Villard

[4] Dillon's proposal was not reflected in the speech as delivered. For text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, December 1, 1958, p. 853. In Dulte 4 from Seattle, November 10, marked "Eyes Only Acting Secretary for President from Secretary," Dulles noted that the President's appearance "will assure this meeting being highly regarded throughout all of free Asia." (Department of State, Central Files, 890.00/11–1058)

Remarks by Secretary Dulles, November 10, and a statement by Under Secretary Dillon, November 12, are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 1, 1958, p. 857 and p. 858, respectively. The communiqué issued at the close of the Seattle meeting is *ibid.*, p. 860. The Official and Classified Reports of the U.S. Delegation are attached to a note dated January 21, 1959, from Reinhardt to the Division of Records Management. (Department of State, Central Files, 890.00/11–1358)

21. Memorandum From Richard B. Peters to John M. Steeves, Political Adviser to CINCPAC[1]

Pearl Harbor, November 7, 1958.

SUBJECT

4-Power Planning

The thoughts expressed below may be of assistance for your discussions on this subject in Washington next week.

1. We believe that the proposal for presentation of joint, coordinated proposals within SEATO will tend to undermine SEATO and that revelation of some ANZUS planning to the British may have been a rather serious error. Admiral Felt is concerned that discussions of this type may lead to demands from our allies for discussion of possible command structure arrangements. While in these respects the United States planners may have gone too far in the discussions, I think it important to recall that the discussions were first agreed to between President Eisenhower and Prime Minister Macmillan, that U.S. officials saw the directive issued to the British planners before it was given to them and commented upon it, and that in most respects what the planners did was quite consistent with the guidance they were given.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/11–758. Top Secret. Peters was a political officer attached to CINCPAC POLAD.

As a matter of fact the talks themselves, and the results, show up the serious gaps which have existed (and continue to exist) with respect to war planning in Southeast Asia. I think it important that we do nothing which would cause us to lose the benefits we have already gained from these talks and which might be gained from future talks along the same line (though preferably in SEATO).

2. You have mentioned Admiral Felt's rejection of the idea of establishing an air base (or other base) in North Borneo. While I appreciate the reasons underlying his views, I think it important to keep in mind the recommendations with respect to North Borneo in the Nash Report[2] which also viewed our strategic interests in the Far East on a broad basis.

3. We appear to be in a dilemma with respect to the report of the talks in September among the 4-country planners.[3] The United States accepted the responsibility for issuing a "smooth" copy of the report which exists in the rough notes of the planners of each of the countries. The other 3 countries are expecting and anxiously awaiting their copies of this report; two countries have already inquired about the delay in issuance of the report.

A solution might be for Admiral Felt to forward copies of the report to each of the countries under cover of a letter stating that he has not yet reviewed it and will offer his comments in a subsequent message. This will open the way for him to come along later with reservations and comment intended to place such planning on whatever basis is in the future deemed best.

4. The 4-power talks, and the recent discussions here which the report itself has occasioned, highlight the previous lack of planning of this kind within SEATO. Inquiry here reveals that this planning has not been conducted within SEATO because of United States military concern that their war plans would be compromised. With considerable justification, they contend that security is not to be relied upon in countries such as Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines, and that it is not possible to conduct meaningful planning with those countries without revealing in some degree our own war plans. In short, thus far at least, the military are willing to trust the security of the "white" countries and unwilling to trust the security of our Asian allies. While

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[2] Entitled "United States Overseas Military Bases: Report to the President," this report was delivered to the White House on December 24, 1957. It was prepared by a group headed by Frank C. Nash, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. The report recommended careful consideration of a base in North Borneo. Copies of the report are in Department of State, EUR/RPM Files: Lot 64 D 444, Nash Report, and S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Overseas Bases.

[3] See footnote 4, Document 19. The report has not been found.

this is understandable, and may be completely realistic and intelligent, it poses important questions with respect to the future of SEATO and our meaningful activity in that organization.

I need hardly add that this entire problem highlights an important shortcoming in United States war planning—the absence of political advice except at the very high (and therefore very generalized) NSC level. From close experience we know that the military are very jealous of their war plans and feel very strongly that "outsiders" must not be allowed to participate in their formulation in any way, or even have knowledge of them. We may wish to consider ways in which political considerations might be brought to bear without interfering with their purely military planning and problems.

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22. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, November 17, 1958, 4 p.m.[1]

SUBJECT

US–UK Talks on Far Eastern Policy[2]

PARTICIPANTS

Sir Robert Scott, Commissioner General for Southeast Asia
The Secretary
Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador
Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary
J. Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary

The conversation recorded below included two major lines of thought:

(1) The Secretary alluded several times to the essential need somehow to tie together the Far Eastern area, an area so disparate as compared with Western Europe. Sir Robert Scott agreed but to date the only mechanism available seemed to be the Colombo Plan which had not by reason of its very nature been able to go far in this direction.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.00/11–1758. Secret. Drafted by Parsons.

[2] During a discussion of the Taiwan Straits crisis in New York on September 26, Dulles and Lloyd agreed on a joint examination of long-term aspects of the situation in East Asia. Dulles suggested that the process should begin with an intelligence assessment, and agreed that Caccia "might approach Allen Dulles to get this started," after which Scott would visit Washington "to advance the assessment." (Memorandum of conversation; *ibid.*, Conference Files: Lot 63 D 123, CF 1123)

(2) Sir Robert said that in accordance with his responsibility for considering and recommending longer term basic policy in the area, he had explored every possible alternate policy towards Communist China, including such proposals as a two China policy, a UN solution, et cetera. He said all of these involved serious limitations and, therefore, he had concluded that under present circumstances the U.S. was pursuing the only possible course of action. There was no alternative to hanging on as best we could in the non-Communist countries, meeting situations as they arose and slowly gathering support and strength.

Opening the discussion, Sir Robert said he had no recommendations or proposals to make but would like to try to look ahead into the future of the Far East over the next five or ten years. He would greatly appreciate the Secretary's views in this respect. As regards the recent Anglo-U.S. intelligence exercise,[3] he thought that there had been a fair measure of agreement and he acknowledged Mr. Robertson's comment that where there was not agreement, we had come to a clearer understanding of the divergences of opinion. It had emerged clearly that continuation of the military deterrent was essential while we continue to work on the political and economic side to bolster the area. On the subject of the off-shore islands, he thought our intelligence people were agreed that the Chinese Communists believe that they could in the end take the islands by a mixture of political and military measures without becoming involved in a war with the United States. Sir Robert then ventured the general observation that perhaps we had best let the situation drift on more or less as at present but that this was in some respects a dangerous and humiliating attitude and it left the initiative to the Communists.

The Secretary commented that the situation on the mainland was ominous. He called attention to the terrific current effort to build military and economic strength. The Chinese Communists might, of course, overdo it and stumble but as of the present he thought we had no evidence which indicated the likelihood of a revolt. Nevertheless we seldom did get advance notice of an outbreak in Communist countries. Sir Robert believed that there was undoubtedly great unhappiness and human hardship on the mainland but he doubted that there was any organized movement against the regime. He and the Secretary agreed that the military, the police and political commissars were indeed strong and in charge. The Secretary observed, however, if the Army became discontented it could conceivably turn against the re-

[3] In a memorandum for the files dated October 14, Parsons wrote that on October 10 he had informed Allen Dulles by telephone that the Secretary desired him to coordinate the proposed exchange of intelligence estimates on East Asia with the British. (*Ibid.*, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Asia 1956–1968) The exchanges took place October 29–November 1.

gime as in Hungary. Actually the Chinese people could do nothing against modern arms unless elements of the military defected. Sir Robert found no evidence to suggest any serious threat to the regime, to which the Secretary remarked it could of course exist without our knowledge. There was, for instance, no advance notice in Hungary. Despite the lack of evidence it was at least theoretically possible. Nevertheless, as a working assumption in the absence of evidence, we had to assume that the Communists are creating a very strong military police state. It was reasonable to think that they would run into difficulties but one could not go much further.

Mr. Robertson observed that there was a good deal of evidence of discontent in connection with the communes and the civilian militia to whom the regime was afraid to give guns. These steps were recent, however, and it was too soon for the opposition to have developed far. There was, however, frightful hardship and the evidence suggested that at least 350,000 people had been liquidated since the 100 flowers experiment was tried. This experiment revealed much intellectual restiveness. The Secretary agreed but noted that we do not have any evidence of restiveness in regard to adverse attitudes in the army and police. Mr. Robertson pointed out that what happens to the Army is of crucial importance. When they had a free choice after the Korean armistice, 75% of the Chinese Communist prisoners, even after several months of brain-washing, elected not to return to the North. Sir Robert said that if the bars were down, the Chinese would flood into Hong Kong. He inquired as to how the Secretary saw the immediate problem of Formosa and the off-shore islands.

The Secretary said that according to some evidence it would not appear that the Chinese Communists really wanted to take the off-shore islands now. Both from the talks in Warsaw and from other indications it looked as though they see some advantage in maintaining the islands as an irritant. Doubtless the original bombardment had been intended to take the islands by interdiction. However, bombardment had had little effect on the islands and we had circumvented the interdiction by our efforts. He ventured to think that perhaps the shelling would lapse into a rather sporadic affair. He had in fact predicted quite early that if we could succeed in resupplying the islands, the Chinese Communists would gradually taper off in their efforts. All the recent foolishness, such as the announcement of shooting on odd but not even days, was apparently for face saving purposes to make it appear that it was the Chinese Communists themselves who were permitting the islands to survive by unhampered supply on even days. This was perhaps a clever move psychologically. At the moment the Chinese Communists continue their military build-up in

adjacent areas. The Chinese Communist air force had been humiliated by their lack of success against the Chinese Nationalists and so there might possibly be air battles later in order to regain face.

Sir Harold Caccia observed that if the Chinese Communists had decided to let the islands remain as they are and to keep the Chinese Nationalists on them, we should consider if that was in our interest and in that of the Chinese Nationalists also. The Secretary then made it clear that we in this country had always wanted to have these islands out of the way and no one would be unhappy if they could just disappear. The trouble was, however, that if we forced the Chinese Nationalists off the islands it would have a very bad effect on Taiwan, perhaps a fatal effect. We did hope that the Chinese Nationalists would cut down their forces on the islands somewhat when they were not being fired at. He had had a long talk with Chiang on just this point and urged him not to commit his prestige too far on these small islands. He had suggested to Chiang that the Chinese Nationalist cause was too great a cause to relate it to specific bits of territory. Churchill, when Britain itself was threatened, had never tied the British cause even to the British Isles but had made it clear that if these were lost, they would fight on elsewhere. The Chinese Nationalists also had never committed themselves to the holding of specific points against the Japanese but had continued to fight on when they lost Peiping, Nanking and other key cities. The Secretary said he thought he had made some impression on Chiang but not to the point of bringing Chiang to the more desirable course of holding the islands very lightly and withdrawing if there were major attacks. Chiang had not reached that point in his thinking. If we on the other hand forced him to it, it could well break morale on Formosa. If we could handle this matter as we had the Tachens it would be better but nobody could say how you could bring this about. In the Secretary's view, if you forced Chiang by terminating aid, he would probably say that he would fight on with what he had until he was finished. In any event the risk was too great. The Secretary doubted that general war would come out of the off-shore island crisis or even that the islands would necessarily be lost. He noted that they are not now being used for any provocative purposes. Perhaps we could educate the Chinese Nationalists over a period of time but if we forced the issue now too much it would be bad.

Sir Robert observed that if we forced the Chinese Nationalists off the islands there could be a kind of earthquake shock wave which would spread out over the area of Southeast Asia. It would be bad for American prestige to have it appear that we had let our friends down.

Broadening the discussion somewhat, the Secretary remarked that the U.S. was trying to do a very difficult job indeed, the outcome of which could not be foreseen. We were trying to hold the Asian island

and peninsula chain which was of such vital importance. However, between the elements of this chain there were geographic, political, cultural, psychological—in fact many barriers. Then there was the adjacent dynamic mass of Communist China. This regime clearly wanted U.S. power out of the Western Pacific. In the face of this there ought to be some way to tie the whole area together for greater strength but this was a tough problem, as was indicated, for example, by the problem of Japanese-Korean relations where Rhee's animosity prevented a rapprochement. Rhee was even more anti-Japanese than he was anti-Communist, and he distrusted us because of our attitude toward Japan. He thought Teddy Roosevelt had sold Korea out to the Japanese once and he was afraid we would do it again. Then there was the Japanese desire, moderate at present, for the reversion of Okinawa, where in fact the U.S. had a difficult time to keep the local people content. We were tempted to make much of the Chinese Communists plowing up the graves of ancestors but many Okinawan graves had been bulldozed into airplane runways on Okinawa and, if we were not careful, we could have a Cyprus-type situation there on our hands.

The Secretary then passed on to brief consideration of various country situations such as Formosa and then the Philippines where the situation was not as good as we would like to see. Magsaysay's loss had been a tragic one and the present government was corrupt with the result that the situation had deteriorated a lot since Garcia's advent. In Southeast Asia, Thailand was in the throes of an upheaval which seemed, however, to be in the framework of a pro-Western policy. Sarit's position, however, was not stable and, as Mr. Robertson stated, he was an ill man. As for Cambodia and Laos, the situation was somewhat better in the latter country with the pro-Western element having survived with less initial damage than we had feared when they made their too soft deal with the Pathet Lao a year ago. In Cambodia, there was the erratic ex-King who dominated things and who talked one way one day and another way the next. His visit here had apparently worked to our advantage for the present. In Viet-Nam the situation looked rather good, although we hear rumblings over Diem's somewhat autocratic rule. In Indonesia, it looked at the moment as though our policy had been a wise one. We had played along rather carefully and now the Government and the Army have perhaps realized the magnitude of the possible catastrophe they faced there. We had been careful to leave a choice open to them and they appear to have taken it. Going on to the South, it was not necessary to say anything of Australia and New Zealand. That left Malaya and Singapore, in regard to the latter of which Sir Robert said he was not taking any bets just now.

The Secretary said that in the face of the many difficulties it sometimes seemed to him a miracle we had been able to play along and that the various crises had been survived.

Sir Robert felt that there was no alternative to meeting these with patience and working slowly towards our objectives. He then expressed the view that the communiqué issued following the Secretary's Taipei visit was a big step forward and of major significance.[4] The Secretary said that no one should think it had been easy to obtain agreement on the communiqué. It had taken a fair amount of persuasion. However, the concept of free China as a symbol of the culture and tradition of China had seemed important. Sir Robert agreed, commenting that if differences should build up inside Communist China, it was preferable that a spontaneous internal movement to overthrow the Communists should take place rather than have it come from outside intervention. The Secretary thought that a revolt would have to originate internally. In fact, it might well develop new leadership (rather than taking the Taipei leaders). In fact, he had been tempted to express publicly views on new leadership. In any event this concept of the role for Taiwan was useful. If only there were some way to tie in the whole area, it would be most valuable, but there was none in sight.

Mr. Robertson said that Ambassador George Yeh had always been offended by the idea that free China was tied to the leadership of one man, Chiang Kai-shek. The present President will be followed by others. The Vice President today is a good man and a strong leader, and furthermore does not suffer from association with a past reputation. The Secretary remarked that essentially what you have to operate on is faith. Despotism had always come a cropper. In response to Sir Robert's comment that the time schedule for coming a cropper was difficult to foresee, the Secretary went on to note that the Axis had almost all of Europe at one time, confining the free world to the fringes, and yet they were overcome. He too did not know what the time element would be in this situation.

Turning to Japan, the Secretary remarked on the industrial power of Japan in the area and said the Chinese Communists could not match Japan's productivity for a considerable time. However, at present Japan was not altogether solid. Kishi had just run into trouble—there was a good deal of Communist penetration in the labor and education fields and Chinese Communist trade competition could hurt Japan very much. A trade war could be most damaging. There are, therefore, influences which could possibly cause Japan to seek an accommodation with the Chinese Communists. However, Japan has always wanted to play a role as a power. She could do so *with* the United

[4] Dulles was in Taipei October 21–23. For text of the communiqué, see Department of State *Bulletin*, November 10, 1958, p. 721.

States; if she broke with us, she could only play a minor role behind that of the USSR and the Chinese Communists. He therefore thought the chances were that the Japanese will want to play with us and be a factor in the balance of power. There are elements of strength in Japan, somewhat scattered to be sure and not very cohesive.

Sir Robert replied that in his opinion the Japanese were not doing too badly. Their system of government had not yet reached real maturity with disorders in the Diet and elsewhere still occurring. Present day Japan also seemed basically anti-military. However, the most fundamental factor influencing the Japanese was that of their economic survival. He thought the best chance of Japanese survival was in rivalry with China—not subordination. He pointed out that the Chinese were already engaging in something of a trade war, dumping rice and other products. The Secretary said that this had now broadened to include various industrial products which in turn led Sir Robert to remark that Chinese Communist built trucks will be imported into Malaya next month. This represented an almost incredible degree of progress. The Secretary again adverted to the question of finding some way to tie the Far Eastern area together. He contrasted the area to Europe and pointed out that each country tended to be alone except as the United States was there as a common element. Sir Robert said that there was only the mechanism of the Colombo Plan which was basically political in its effects but the Plan could not bear too great a weight. The Secretary alluded to his speech in Seattle to the Chamber of Commerce which he thought might have been a bit too strong for some of the Asians, to which Mr. Robertson said that all reports indicated that the Asians had indeed liked the speech very much. Sir Robert remarked that the Japanese wished to play a greater role in Indonesia from the economic point of view and he thought that there was some chance for them to do so if they took things slowly.

The Secretary raised the question as to whether, as the Chinese Communist menace loomed greater, it would bring the different countries of the area closer together. Sir Robert said that the Burmese are already scared and acting more neutral. The Indonesians were taking steps to control their Chinese minority and he did not see them as likely to abandon their peculiar brand of neutralism and neutrality. A good deal depends on what faith they might have in the United States. Mr. Robertson interjected that Subandrio[5] had remarked the other day that the Chinese Communists were their greatest long-term problem and that it was China they feared.

Sir Harold Caccia referred to Walter Lippmann's recent article in which he expressed the view that the Russians might make a real pitch to Indonesia. This, of course, was just before the recent Khrushchev

[5] Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

threat to Berlin and at a time when the Indonesians were looking toward the East for friends. This reminded the Secretary of Lippmann's report of his talk with Khrushchev in which the latter made a distinction between Korea and Germany where the civil war was stabilized and China and Viet-Nam where the civil war was not stabilized. The Secretary found it strange that Khrushchev should have put Viet-Nam in the latter category, particularly with the Chinese Communists having made a commitment at the government level in regard to Viet-Nam.

The Secretary invited Sir Robert to express any ideas about the future in the area. Sir Robert replied that it was his job to try to think ahead and advise his government on policy for the years ahead. In this context he had examined every possible course of action with regard to the China problem and had studied all the various solutions which had been put forth, such as the two China solution, withdrawal from the off-shore islands, a UN solution, and others and had found real limitations and dangers in each. Each one seemed to open up the possibility of even greater dangers. He therefore had drawn the conclusion that there was no practicable alternative to the course which the United States was following at the present time. The Secretary said that we would never be able to get any agreement from the Chinese Communists. Sir Robert said that looking at the non-Communist countries of the area he saw no option but to hang on, to meet the problems as they arose, and to try bit by bit to influence the situation. Much time would be needed. In this connection he said that, of course, the other side might make serious mistakes. The Secretary added that dictatorships often look well from the outside but often something seems to happen to them. Time does not always work for the other side. Sir Robert agreed and said that one of the efforts which his office was making was to try to give the other countries more of a vested interest in their own freedom. It had helped to institute modest police training and educational programs for this purpose. He then alluded to the Colombo Plan and the conversation concluded with a remark by the Secretary that he had thought the meeting in Seattle had been worthwhile. The United States had sought to make a major effort to show its support and to that end the President had gone out to open the Conference and he himself had remained for the full four days.[6]

[6] In a memorandum to Dulles dated November 24, Robertson described follow-up talks held by Scott with Department officials November 17–20, emphasizing that recent events in the Taiwan Straits crisis had brought the United Kingdom closer to U.S. views on the issue. (Department of State, PPS Files; Lot 67 D 548, Asia 1956–1958; included in the microfiche supplement)

23. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, February 5, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Far East: China, Indonesia, Laos

PARTICIPANTS

United States
Mr. Robt. Murphy
Admiral Dennison[2]
Mr. J. Graham Parsons
Mr. Robt. McBride
Mr. Dean Brown
Mr. Marshall Green
Mr. Eric Kocher
Mr. James O'Sullivan
Mr. Frank T. Underhill
Mr. Thomas J. Corcoran

France
Mr. Jean Daridan[3]
Mr. Herve Alphand
Mr. Charles Lucet
Mr. Pierre Landy

United Kingdom
Sir Harold Caccia
Admiral Denny
Mr. Arthur de la Mare
Mr. E. Youde

[Here follows discussion of the China area and of Korea; included in the microfiche supplement.]

Mr. Alphand said that he would now like to take up Indonesia and Laos from the point of view of the nature of the threat, the attitudes of the three powers, and international consequences of any actions taken.

At Mr. Murphy's request Admiral Dennison outlined the military situation in which he described the DRV military capacity to overrun all of Southeast Asia. He said the question was not really one of DRV capacity to aggress but of DRV intentions to do so.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, Tripartite Talks. Secret. Background information on tripartite talks between the United States, France, and Great Britain is contained in a memorandum from Green to Robertson dated January 15. (*Ibid.*, AF/AFI Files: Lot 62 D 406, Tripartite I; included in the microfiche supplement)

[2] Admiral Robert L. Dennison, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy).

[3] Director General of the French Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Daridan asked how the powers might react to meet the threat to Laos in the absence of the ICC. He considered and rejected the possible use of UN observers, direct RLG–DRV negotiations and reactivation of the ICC but suggested Indian good offices might be useful. Mr. Murphy suggested that the latter proposal might stimulate the Indian desire to reactivate the ICC/Laos. Mr. Parsons said we agreed that a UN observer at this time would merely raise the question of the reactivation of the ICC and direct negotiations were undesirable in the light of the 1957 experience, and because the validity of the results would be questionable in the light of the RLG recognition of the GVN which is not likely to accept them. He added that we were reluctant to accept the Indian good offices idea because it would be tantamount to reactivation of the ICC and because certain Indian personnel would be likely to become involved in internal Lao political problems of interest to the Vietnamese Communists. We understood the desire to avoid rejecting all Indian suggestions but wondered whether any new initiative was really desirable at this time.

Mr. Parsons mentioned the suggestion that Khamphan Panya[4] attempt to allay Indian concern while avoiding reactivation of the ICC by writing M.J. Desai[5] giving details of the border incidents and inviting Desai's reactions. Alphand and Caccia agreed to refer the suggestion to their governments.

Mr. Alphand said that, although the French did not feel a DRV attack on Laos was building up, they wondered what US policy would be in the event of such aggression and suggested the desirability of joint US-UK-French planning for such an eventuality. Mr. Murphy replied that we saw the Lao problem as more political than military, with the effort being along classical Communist subversive lines. He said he felt that SEATO obligations required planning within that alliance and that tripartite planning on this subject would cause us embarrassment vis-à-vis other SEATO members. It was also his feeling that military planning of this type was beyond the scope of the current discussions and could do the three powers much harm politically in Southeast Asia. Admiral Dennison fully supported this view, adding that SEATO is criticized in Asia and the UK, US and France are too, because of non-Far East countries trying to mastermind their affairs. Sir Harold and Mr. Murphy both said they could not discuss such planning without further instructions.

Sir Harold suggested if the French are desirous of pursuing this point they should put forward political bases and assumptions for the type of military planning they had in mind. The French agreed to consider this.

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[4] Foreign Minister of Laos.

[5] Indian member of the International Control Commission.

Mr. Daridan stated that in Indonesia the French have been in a dilemma. The Dutch complain to the French that they are being squeezed by the Indonesians and they request the French to take strong measures and reprisals against the Indonesians. In addition the Dutch and the Australians are concerned about the possibility of an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea. On the other hand the supply of weapons and military equipment from the Communist Bloc increases the Communist influence in Indonesia.

Mr. Daridan continued that representations to Indonesia about these problems have steadily dwindled to nothing. The NATO members' commitment to consult before making deliveries of arms to Indonesia has also dwindled as was shown by the UK in its recent delivery of six Fairey–Gannett planes. He said that the French were under pressure from French businessmen who wanted to make deliveries on Indonesian orders. He continued that the French are afraid that the NATO resolution regarding consultation has been turned around but that the French Government continues to believe it would be impossible to lift its embargo on arms deliveries to Indonesia. He added that the French want to be informed of British and U.S. plans for delivery of arms and said that he wanted to stress that the Indonesian internal situation indicated that the minimum possible amount of arms should be delivered.

Mr. Murphy noted that Mr. Daridan had said the French Government was under pressure from French businessmen and wondered if it was not also under some strain from Mr. Luns'[6] blood pressure.

Mr. Parsons said that over the past several months the Netherlands has expressed to us concern that the Indonesians might attack West New Guinea and at the amount of arms the Indonesians were receiving. From time to time the Dutch have made us privy to intelligence reports, many of which relate to second or third-hand statements from Indonesian leaders indicating that some military action might take place against West New Guinea. Mr. Parsons continued that we have been in constant touch with Indonesian leaders, both military and political, and that we have received assurances that the Indonesian Government has no intention of using force regarding West New Guinea. Only recently the Foreign Minister himself, Dr. Subandrio, said that even if the Indonesians were considering the use of force in West New Guinea, which he denied that they were doing, they would not resort to such a course because world opinion would be against them. Mr. Parsons pointed out that we have also heard from both the Dutch and the Australians that these governments have been given Indonesian assurances regarding the use of force in connection with West New Guinea.

[6] Joseph M.A.H. Luns, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands.

Mr. Parsons added that we have made it clear to the Indonesians that if there were resort to force, we would be against it. The Secretary had minced no words when he saw Subandrio here in Washington after the Colombo Plan meeting in early November. At that time the Secretary said that there were many territorial disputes around the world where force might be used and we were opposed to the principle of the use of force in settling these matters as much as we are against the use of force in settling differences in the Taiwan Straits area. Mr. Parsons believed the Secretary had mentioned his conversations with Subandrio at the NATO meeting in December. He further pointed out that the Secretary had authorized Luns to make a public statement in this connection last October. All this does not eliminate the possibility of an Indonesian attack but we had received no indications that such an attack is being mounted and for the present we are inclined to accept the Indonesian assurances at face value. We cannot, of course, dismiss the possibility of an attack, particularly as our loyal Dutch allies take indications regarding such attacks so seriously.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Murphy, Mr. Parsons said that we have received no direct evidence of Indonesian intentions from the Dutch but rather a series of second and third-hand reports of conversations involving Indonesian leaders.

Ambassador Caccia pointed out that the Australians also were worried about an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea which might take the form of a direct attack or infiltration. He said there was no present evidence of an Indonesian intention to mount an attack and he supposed that any infiltration which the Indonesians might mount would be brought to the UN. He pointed out that UN action against an Indonesian infiltration would tend to throw the Indonesians into the Communist arms, as undoubtedly the Communist and fellow-traveling nations would support the Indonesians while the West would have to oppose them. He added that he did not know what to do in these circumstances save to warn the Indonesians and he pointed out that Foreign Minister Subandrio is going to Australia in the next few days where he thought the Australians would speak to him as a "Dutch uncle."

Mr. Murphy pointed out that an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea would be financially disastrous for the Indonesians. Mr. Parsons said the Indonesians were already in serious financial difficulties. Mr. Murphy then mentioned that West New Guinea is becoming an increasing financial strain on the Dutch.

Ambassador Caccia continued that there was every possible argument for not supplying the Indonesians with anything in the way of military equipment, but pointed out that if this policy were followed, the Indonesians would simply obtain arms from elsewhere. He said that we must try to give the Indonesians an alternative to complete

Communist domination by supplying the Indonesians with some weapons which should be in the form of light arms rather than those which are clearly of an aggressive nature. The choice of what to supply the Indonesians is a difficult balance to strike as we want to give enough to keep Indonesia free of Communist domination but not enough to encourage ventures in West New Guinea.

Mr. Parsons said that Indonesian opinion regarding the Communist Bloc is evolving in most, although not all, Indonesian leaders. He said that in the Quemoy crisis last summer a highly placed Indonesian leader told Ambassador Jones that the threat to Indonesia comes not from the US but in the long run from Communist China. Mr. Parsons pointed out the fact that Indonesian leaders had waited for so long to obtain so little from the West indicated their desire to keep out of Communist hands.

Ambassador Alphand said that the French wanted two things: to keep a full flow of information regarding arms deliveries to Indonesia and they were also concerned as to what would happen if there is a full-scale aggression against West New Guinea.

Mr. Murphy replied that we have indicated to the party directly concerned that we would be opposed to the use of force in connection with West New Guinea and he supposed that if force were used, it would be taken to the appropriate bodies of the UN.

Ambassador Alphand then summarized by stating that what we really contemplated was a political solution in the event of a full-scale aggression, to which Mr. Murphy agreed.

Mr. Parsons then referred to an earlier statement made by Mr. Daridan in which Mr. Daridan had said there was a NATO commitment to consult regarding arms deliveries to Indonesia. Mr. Parsons said that we consider we have no commitment to consult NATO but that we agree that we should keep NATO informed. He asked Mr. McBride if this were not true. Mr. McBride said that there was a difference in interpretation. Mr. Daridan interjected that the French interpretation was that there is a commitment on the part of the NATO partners to consult regarding arms deliveries to Indonesia. Ambassador Caccia said that the British interpretation of the NATO commitment is the same as the American although the British would of course give very careful consideration to any views put forth by its NATO partners. He went on to say that the British believe that it is more important to keep the partners directly concerned informed than it is to keep the NAC informed.

24. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, February 16, 1959—11 a.m.

2066. While I have not yet seen any indication of Lao attitudes with respect to joining SEATO following its renunciation of the Geneva Accords, I presume that this question may arise. Therefore, suggest it would be helpful if we could have Department's views and guidance.

It seems to me principal argument in favor of encouraging Laos formally to join SEATO would be that it might give present RLG greater sense of security and confidence in dealing with internal and external Communist threat as well as serve to strengthen its ties with SEATO neighbors, principally Thailand. From SEATO political standpoint addition of Asian member would also serve give broader Asian and regional character to pact.

Following seem to me to be principal arguments on negative side:

1. As formal member of SEATO Laos would enjoy no greater protection than it presently enjoys as protocol state.
2. Militarily Laos would bring only liabilities to SEATO.
3. Formally joining SEATO, particularly on heels of renunciation of Geneva Accords and other steps taken by Phoui against NLHX might tip decision of latter again to "take to bush" and with Chinese Communists and Viet-Minh support resumed guerrilla action at time when RLG position in countryside and capability of Army is still very weak.
4. Probable negative reaction of Sihanouk to fancied "encirclement."

Therefore, on balance, am inclined to view we should not now encourage Laos to apply for formal SEATO membership, but rather regard this as move for future when RLG internal control is better solidified.

Johnson

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/2–1659. Secret. Repeated to Vientiane, Phnom Penh, Saigon, Manila, Karachi, Canberra, Wellington, London, and Paris.

25. Memorandum From the Special Assistant for SEATO Affairs (Zimmermann) to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Dillon)[1]

Washington, March 30, 1959.

SUBJECT

SEATO: Discussion of Force Availabilities and Command Relations in Connection with Measures to Counter Communist Insurgency

The SEATO Military Advisers at their Ninth Meeting in September 1958[2] agreed 1) that member nations should submit estimates of their forces which *might* be available for inclusion in a SEATO force assembled to counter Communist insurgency and 2) that they would bear in mind the question of command structure. Both matters will arise at the Tenth Meeting, April 2–4, and DOD is now requesting State concurrence to establishing the following CINCPAC recommendations as U.S. positions for the meeting.[3]

Force Availabilities: As a SEATO force would not necessarily be under U.S. command, the U.S. should limit the size of basic forces estimated to be available and no major supporting forces should be included.

A) In general, U.S. forces which might be made available would not exceed a Marine battalion landing team or Army battalion combat team together with lift and/or logistic support for the team, a USAF composite airlift squadron, a communications detachment and technical and advisory personnel.

B) In the specific case of Laos, U.S. forces which might be made available to a SEATO force are one aerial delivery and supply detachment from the Army plus technical and advisory personnel, a composite airlift detachment and one communications detachment from the Air Force. In addition, limited Naval and airlift support might be available for support under U.S. control.

The foregoing does not constitute force commitments and forces selected would depend upon the existing situation.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, SEATO 1959. Secret. In a covering note to Parsons dated March 31, Zimmermann stated that Dillon had requested this memorandum on March 30 in preparation for his meeting with the President on March 31; see *infra*. According to the note, the digest of the CINCPAC recommendations contained in this memorandum is based on CINCPAC telegram 010202Z, February 1, and was delivered to Dillon the evening of March 30. Telegram 010202Z has not been found.

[2] Held in Bangkok, September 26–28.

[3] In a letter from Irwin to Robertson dated March 26. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/3–2659) Parsons' reply, dated March 31, is summarized in footnote 3, *infra*.

Command Relations: By discussing principles and not details the U.S. will avoid revealing U.S. plans or committing the U.S. to specific solutions. The subject would be developed along the following general lines:

A) No SEATO Command organization in being is required at this time.

B) The headquarters of a member nation having the necessary facilities and personnel should be considered to form the nucleus of a SEATO headquarters.

C) When the decision is taken to implement a SEATO plan, a member nation should be appointed to be responsible to the SEATO Council through the Military Advisers for the conduct of SEATO military operations.

D) The appointed nation should designate a combined commander.

E) There should be the widest possible member nation representation in SEATO headquarters.

F) Administration and logistic support should be the responsibility of member nations providing the forces.

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26. Memorandum of a Conference With the President, White House, Washington, March 31, 1959, 8:44–9:30 a.m.[1]

OTHERS PRESENT

Acting Secretary Herter
Mr. Douglas Dillon

The President asked Mr. Dillon if he had read the draft of the proposed speech to be made at Gettysburg College.[2] Mr. Dillon said he had and that he thought it should help the Mutual Security Program a great deal. The President said he would send a copy of the text, when it was about in shape, to Secretary Dulles.

Mr. Dillon next referred to the forthcoming meeting of SEATO. This will be the fifth meeting. The Asians want the next one to be held outside their area, and the French and British agree. He wondered if we might offer to have it held in the United States. The President said he had been toying with the idea of suggesting that the next meeting should be a meeting of Heads of Government, to be held in the

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, DDE Diaries. Secret. Drafted by Goodpaster on April 3. Dillon prepared another memorandum of this conversation on March 31. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/3–3159)

[2] Draft not found. For text of the speech as delivered on April 7, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959*, pp. 309–317.

Philippines. In that case the President would go, with the thought of going on to India and Pakistan (perhaps also to Indonesia, spending something like ten days in the Far East beyond Manila). During discussion, difficulties were recognized such as probable pressure to visit Japan, Formosa, Korea, Australia, etc. Mr. Dillon pointed out that if it were agreed to hold the Foreign Ministers meeting here next year, there would be relatively little difficulty in changing it to a Heads of Government meeting in the Philippines. The President agreed that the offer to hold a Foreign Ministers meeting here might be made.

Mr. Dillon next said that the SEATO military planners have been active, with Admiral Felt taking part. They have agreed that the countries should inform each other as to the forces that might be made available in case of insurrections, in particular in Laos. The Department of Defense wants to say that the maximum we might make available is of the order of one battalion, one composite air squadron, plus amphibious and air lift; as to Laos we would contemplate no more than an air delivery and supply detachment. The President said he thought the Asians would prefer to provide the standby forces themselves without U.S. or European elements because of the old concerns over Imperialism. Mr. Dillon stressed that what is being discussed is not a commitment, but is an indication of intention. The President said it is his instinct to hold back on the question of forces, even while he strongly agrees that this kind of planning is valuable. Mr. Dillon commented that forces could only be called upon by unanimous vote of SEATO. He thought he could play down the question of U.S. participation, stressing that troops should come from Asia. He added that present thinking is that no command organization in being is required. Should necessity arise, it would be met by using the military headquarters of some one nation, augmenting it with other nationals. He said only the principles would be discussed. The President agreed that it might be studied.[3]

[3] In a letter to Irwin dated March 31, drafted by Zimmermann and cleared with Dillon in draft, Parsons gave the concurrence of the Department of State to presentation of Admiral Felt's proposals on SEATO command relations and U.S. force availabilities as the U.S. position at the forthcoming SEATO Military Advisers' meeting, with the following caveat: "In considering the question of force availabilities, however, the Department of State, for political reasons, would wish to assure that a SEATO force assembled to counter Communist insurgency would be as broadly representative of the member nations as possible and that United States participation would be kept to the minimum required by the circumstances, particularly with regard to non-technical operations."

A marginal note by Zimmermann indicates the President cleared the paragraph in substance in a conversation with Dillon. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/3–2659)

[Here follows discussion of the Philippines, Central and South America, and NATO.]

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Brigadier General, USA

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27. Memorandum of a Conversation, Ambassador Johnson's Residence, Wellington, April 7, 1959, 5:20 p.m.[1]

USDel/MC/2

PARTICIPANTS

The United States	*The United Kingdom*
Under Secretary Dillon	UK Chief Delegate (Minister of Defense) Sandys
Mr. Reinhardt	
Ambassador Johnson	

SUBJECT

Subjects for discussion at Fifth SEATO Council Meeting

Mr. Sandys called on Mr. Dillon at 5:20 this evening to discuss various matters that might be raised in the SEATO Council Meeting. There was some discussion of the possibility of the Asian Members raising the question of increased economic aid. Mr. Sandys took the view that this was primarily of interest to the United States and that the UK would follow the US lead in this regard. Mr. Dillon indicated that the Asian Members might also be pointing their finger at the UK and also pointed out that one aspect of the matter was the dissatisfaction of the Thais and the Secretary General with the action of the UK in vetoing an assistant for the Economic Services Officer. Mr. Sandys made no comment on this.

Mr. Sandys brought up the subject of the Military Advisers' paper on Communist Insurgency,[2] with a specific reference to Laos. He said that in spite of the injunctions of the other Military Advisers, he feared that the French might still attempt to talk to the Laotians concerning the matter. He also indicated some dissatisfaction at the failure of the United States to commit ground forces to such an action in Laos and hoped that the UK "would not have to go it alone". Mr. Dillon pointed

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 560, CF 1253. Top Secret.
[2] Not found.

to the United States commitment to provide lift and said he thought that Pakistan, among others, might be expected to provide troops. Mr. Sandys indicated skepticism on this.

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28. Progress Report Prepared by the SEATO Military Advisers for the SEATO Council[1]

MA1OM *Wellington, April 7, 1959.*

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE SEATO COUNCIL FROM THE MILITARY ADVISERS, WELLINGTON, APRIL 1959

Introduction

1. This report contains a summary of the work accomplished by the Military Advisers since the Council last met in Manila in March 1958. At that meeting the Council was advised of the programme of future work that had been drawn up. Progress on this programme is discussed below.

Planning for the Defence of the Treaty Area

Intelligence Estimate of the Communist Threat to the SEATO Area

2. We have approved a reassessment of the military threat to the Treaty Area. We believe that the Communists do not currently contemplate the application of overt military force, although the security of the Treaty Area will continue to be threatened by the subversive activities of the indigenous Communist parties, and by the diplomatic, economic and cultural propagandist offensive of the Sino-Soviet bloc. Nevertheless, the risk of hostilities breaking out through miscalculation by the Communists cannot be overlooked and we have considered it prudent to draw up plans to cover certain eventualities. These are discussed further below.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 560, CF 1254. SEATO Top Secret. Attached to a covering note dated April 7 by Major General Cyril E. Weir, Military Adviser from New Zealand and Chairman of the Tenth Military Advisers' Conference held in Wellington April 2–4. (SCM/59/D–1) The other Military Advisers were: General Luang Swasdi Kolayudh, Thailand; Lieutenant General Manuel E. Cabal, Philippines; Air Marshal Mohammed Asghar Khan, Pakistan; Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling, Australia; Vice Admiral d'Escadre Paul Ortoli, France; and Admiral Felt, United States.

Chinese Communist Overt Intervention

3. We have considered a study[2] defining the hostile acts which should be regarded as prima facie evidence of "Chinese Communist Overt Intervention". This study has been passed to your Representatives for information. We have instructed the Military Planning Office to take the conclusions of this study into account in planning for the defence of South-East Asia.

The Defense of South-East Asia Against Overt Communist Aggression on the Philippines

4. Further consideration has been given to the threat of overt Communist aggression on the Philippines and we have agreed that there is little likelihood of an attack on that country in isolation. We have therefore instructed the Military Planning Office to take the defence of the Philippines into account when they are drawing up other plans for the defence of the Treaty Area.

The Defence of South Vietnam Against Viet Minh (DRV) Aggression with Chinese Communist Covert Support

5. We have taken note of a concept of operations for the defence of South Vietnam against DRV aggression with Chinese Communist covert support, and have directed the Military Planning Office to take this into consideration in the further development of plans for the defence of the Treaty Area.

The Defence of South-East Asia Against Initial Viet Minh (DRV) Aggression and Subsequent Chinese Communist Intervention

6. Under this subject we have considered primarily the defence of the Protocol States and Thailand against DRV aggression and subsequent Chinese Communist intervention. This plan also takes into account the defensive measures required in the Philippines. The development of the plan is progressing satisfactorily in concert with other plans for the defence of the Treaty Area.

The Defence of South-East Asia, Including Pakistan and the Philippines Against an Attack by Chinese Communist and Viet Minh (DRV) Forces

7. A plan to meet this eventuality is currently being prepared in the Military Planning Office.

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[2] Not found.

The Naval Study of the Treaty Area

8. Work on this study is progressing satisfactorily but completion awaits definition of the arrangements for the naval control of shipping and matters pertaining to amphibious operations.

Military Measures To Counter Communist Insurgency

9. Since your last meeting we have considered a further study on this subject which included reappraisals of steps to strengthen the capacity of threatened countries to counter Communist insurgency. We believe that the country most threatened at the present time is Laos. We have therefore considered a plan for the introduction and maintenance of a SEATO force to assist in countering Communist insurgency in that country. We have directed the Military Planning Office to develop this plan further in respect of forces likely to be made available by Member Nations and logistic support requirements.

10. We have also directed the MPO to continue to review the insurgent threat in other Protocol States and develop studies where necessary.

Meetings

11. Since March 1958 we have held further meetings at Bangkok in September 1958 and at Wellington in April 1959. In addition, augmenting the continuing work of the Military Planning Office, a number of our specialist staffs have met as follows:

(a) At the 1st Meeting of the Mapping Ad Hoc Committee—Bangkok, April 1958

(b) At the 4th Meeting of the Intelligence Ad Hoc Committee—Bangkok, December 1958

(c) At a Meeting of a Logistic Working Party—Bangkok, February 1959

SEATO Training Exercises

12. In view of the importance which we attach to combined training, a further series of SEATO exercises have been conducted since your last meeting. These were:

(a) Exercise Vayabut—an air support and air defence exercise in Thailand sponsored jointly by Thailand and the United States—April 1958.

(b) Exercise Ocean Link—a maritime exercise on the Manila–Singapore axis, sponsored by the United States—May 1958.

(c) Exercise Kitisena—a ground forces command post exercise held in Thailand, sponsored jointly by Thailand and the United States—February 1959.

(d) Exercise Air Progress—an air defence, air resupply and air drop exercise held in Thailand, sponsored jointly by Thailand and the United States—March 1959.

13. Further SEATO exercises projected for 1959 are:

(a) Exercise Seademon—a maritime exercise on the Singapore–Manila axis sponsored by Australia—April 1959.
(b) Exercise Halang Dagat—a harbour defence exercise in the Philippines sponsored by the Philippines—June 1959.
(c) Exercise Saddle-Up—an amphibious exercise in North Borneo sponsored jointly by the United Kingdom and the United States—June 1959.

Future Exercises

14. We have approved the exercise schedule for the year 1959/1960 and a programme of exercises for the following two years.

Other Work

Proposed liaison visit by the Chief, Military Planning Office to NATO and the Baghdad Pact Organisation

15. We have agreed in principle to a proposal that the Chief, Military Planning Office should pay a liaison visit to NATO and the Baghdad Pact Organisation. We have instructed the Chief, Military Planning Office to prepare detailed terms of reference of this visit and, when these have been agreed, we shall consult your Representatives for political clearance.

Non-material standardisation

16. Significant progress has been made in this field. Nineteen SEASTAGs (SEATO Standardisation Agreements) have been circulated to Member Nations for ratification. The Military Planning Office is in direct correspondence with the NATO Military Agency for Standardisation and has requested this Agency to forward to the Military Planning Office copies of all further non-material standardisation agreements which can be released to SEATO.

Communications

17. We have further examined the requirement for military communication facilities between Bangkok and Singapore, and have concluded that, at this stage, no requirement exists for a permanent installation of this nature. We have directed, however, that the Military Planning Office shall keep this matter under review.

SEATO Military Finance

18. Agreement has been reached within the Organisation on Financial Regulations and on the Terms of Reference of the Budget Sub-Committee.

19. The Military Budget Estimates for the fiscal year 1959/1960 have been forwarded to your Representatives for transmission to you.

Future Work

20. We have agreed to 22 September 1959 as the tentative date for the Eleventh Military Advisers' Conference in Bangkok.

21. A programme of future work for the Military Planning Office has been drawn up and is attached at Annex.

Recommendations

22. We recommend that the Council note this Progress Report.

Annex

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE WORK

SEATO MILITARY PLANNING OFFICE

The Military Advisers approved the following programme of future work for the Military Planning Office:

(a) To revise and further develop plans for the introduction and maintenance of a SEATO force to assist in countering Communist insurgency in Laos, particularly in respect of forces likely to be made available by member nations and logistic support requirements.

(b) To continue to review the insurgent threat in other Protocol States and develop studies for the introduction and maintenance of a SEATO force to assist in countering Communist insurgency, where indicated.

(c) To further develop the operational and logistic plans in accordance with their direction for the defence of South-East Asia against initial DRV aggression and subsequent Chinese Communist intervention. (In the development of these plans, consideration should be taken of MPO Plan 3/58.)

(d) To further develop operational and logistic plans for the defence of South-East Asia, including Pakistan and the Philippines, against an attack by Chinese Communist and DRV forces.

(e) To examine the report of the Logistics Working Party (LWP1M) and, where appropriate forward comments to the Military Advisers out of session.

(f) To draw up terms of reference for the investigation team examining the question of the class of tank for operations in Thailand.

(g) To complete the Naval study of the Treaty Area.

(h) To prepare a paper setting out in detail the purpose of the proposed liaison visit by the Chief MPO to NATO and the Baghdad Pact Organisation.

(j) To continue work in the field of non-material standardisation.

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29. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Wellington, April 8, 1959—11 p.m.

278. CINCPAC for POLAD. Afternoon session[2] SEATO Council devoted agenda item 4[3] with all delegations making statements except Philippine and New Zealand who will speak tomorrow. Statements consisted general review developments since Manila meeting with major emphasis treaty area, and especial attention given protocol states and Communist economic offensive.

1. Thai Foreign Minister referring Laos said granting emergency powers to government by assembly most heartening development showing Laos Government and people becoming increasingly alert to Communist threat. Incursions from North Vietnam however posed threat not only to Laos but to Thailand also and hoped SEATO members would take cognizance this and if necessary act in accordance with provisions of treaty. Recognition of GRC by Cambodia causing concern to neighbors since Communist China can be expected take advantage its position and step up activities in area constituting serious danger to Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. Hoped SEATO would develop counter-measures. Referring presence Vietnamese in Thailand said matter had been raised with permanent representatives and hoped Council would give it consideration. In discussing economic

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WE/4-859. Confidential; SEATO. Repeated to Bangkok, Karachi, Manila, London, Paris (also for USRO), Canberra, and CINCPAC. This meeting took place April 8–10. Under Secretary Dillon headed the U.S. Delegation, which also included Ambassador Johnson (in his capacity as Council Representative), Admiral Felt (in his capacity as Military Adviser), Reinhardt, Parsons, and 15 others.

[2] The morning session was divided between a public opening session and a closed session devoted to procedural matters, summarized in telegrams 280 and 279 from Wellington, respectively, both dated April 8. (*Ibid.*, 396.1-WE/4-859) Verbatim records of all sessions are *ibid.*, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 560, CF 1248. Additional telegrams summarizing SEATO Council Sessions at the Wellington meeting are included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] An exchange of views on matters affecting the treaty area.

vulnerability some SEATO members asked that Council consider whether time had not come for SEATO to do more in facing economic challenge.

2. Sandys speaking for UK discussed Tibet,[4] Singapore, Macmillan's visit Moscow,[5] Communist economic offensive in area, and Russo-Chinese relations, paying tribute role played by US in Taiwan Straits crisis. Referring protocol states said Communists likely use Cambodia for penetration other countries and would be wise prepare plan in case help requested by Laos or Vietnam.

3. Pakistan Foreign Minister[6] referring Taiwan Straits crisis said lesson learned that Communists can and do retreat in face of force and determination to use it. Although encouraged by developments within Pakistan he said country still facing external pressures from Afghanistan and India. Afghanistan he said has become virtual Soviet satellite and should no longer be considered neutral, adding he wished call special attention of US and UK to this change in Afghanistan status. He reviewed briefly Pakistan-Indian relations regretting military build-up of India with assistance not only from Pakistan's friends but from other quarters.

4. France's delegate[7] in addition to discussing developments in Europe presented historical survey developments in protocol states. Referring Cambodia he defended some recent actions Sihanouk making point Sihanouk wishes preserve neutral position. This connection mentioned return Cambodian delegate from US as further indication of Cambodian interest and friendship with West. He said Cambodia is in great need of understanding and that France would continue to do what it can to assist. Replying to Thai Foreign Minister's appeal for action in connection presence Vietnamese in Thailand he said French well informed this matter and would do everything in their power to contribute its solution.

5. US representative's statement covered developments in Middle East, Communist China, Taiwan Straits, Berlin, Communist economic offensive, and noted favorable developments in Laos and reaction neutrals to events Tibet. Full text by airgram.[8]

6. Speaking of Laos Casey said SEATO members can only applaud the actions taken by the Lao Government but must be careful that such actions do not lead to accusations that government is turning its back on the Geneva accords. If there is any infraction of those

[4] On March 28, the People's Republic of China had declared an end to the existing government in Tibet and transferred its functions to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region under the acting chairmanship of Panchen Lama. Fighting in the region had ensued.

[5] Prime Minister Macmillan was in the Soviet Union February 21–March 3.

[6] Manzur Qadir.

[7] Louis Jacquinot, Minister of State.

[8] Airgram G–32, April 14; included in the microfiche supplement.

accords he said initiative should come from other side. Referring to Cambodia Casey said there was need for SEATO members to make clear to Sihanouk defensive nature of the treaty and need for him observe strict neutrality. Casey referring Subandrio's visit to Australia[9] said that Australia and Indonesia agreed to disagree as to West New Guinea, and that Australia attached great significance to fact that in final communiqué Subandrio had assured Indonesia does not intend use force settlement its claim. Added it incumbent upon all to impress on Indonesia the inadvisability of using force for settlement of territorial claims. Casey referred briefly to ECAFE meeting and to economic problems of the area pointing out need for study by SEATO of these problems and of cooperation among SEATO members.

[9] Subandrio visited Australia February 10–15.

30. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Wellington, April 10, 1959—8 p.m.

295. From Dillon. Reference: London's 36;[2] Department telegram 220.[3] Department will have noted paragraph on Tibet in SEATO communiqué which fairly reflects views expressed during conference discussions.

As suggested reference telegram, delegation discussed with three Asian delegates plus Vietnamese observer possibility resolution or more extensive treatment communiqué. Asian delegates all felt despite their condemnation Chinese Communist actions in Tibet that a resolution would be undesirable. It was their view that for SEATO to inject

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 793B.00/4–1059. Confidential; SEATO.

[2] In telegram 36 from London to Wellington, April 7, repeated to the Department as telegram 5162, the Embassy reported that the British Foreign Office, in deference to the Indian Government, felt it best for Britain not to take the initiative to comment on developments in Tibet, except to point out that Indians and Southeast Asians were highly critical of the actions of the People's Republic of China. According to the Embassy, the Foreign Office had instructed its SEATO delegation to work for limiting any SEATO announcement on Tibet to an expression of general concern. (*Ibid.*, 793B.00/4–759)

[3] In telegram 220, April 8, the Department instructed Dillon to work for a resolution strongly condemning "Chinese Communist behavior" in Tibet, in preference to the general expression of concern advocated by Britain. (*Ibid.*, 793.00/4–759; included in the microfiche supplement)

itself further would be likely give Nehru excuse deflect rising Indian indignation by labeling Tibet as issue being fronted for cold war purposes. These delegates believe it preferable to allow indignation Asian neutrals leaven by itself. Vietnamese in particular cautioned against SEATO going further because of effect on Indians.

In my opinion language of communiqué is maximum that could have been obtained and fully reflects Department's desire for forthright expression of indignation on part of all SEATO members.

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31. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Canberra, April 11, 1959—5 p.m.

451. Department pass CINCPAC for POLAD. Paris for Embassy and USRO. Following is summary report restricted session held Wellington from 9:55 to 12:15 April 10. Meeting was held in Cabinet Room Parliament Building with chief delegates and two advisors. For US Johnson and Felt accompanied Dillon. No verbatim reporters were present and no formal record was made of meeting, it being agreed discussion would be entirely informal and strictly confidential character maintained. Public record of activities showed only chief delegates were invited by chairman "for morning tea".

Dillon opened meeting with oral report on last NATO Ministerial meeting in Washington. Report was previously coordinated with UK and France. Only discussion following report concerned likelihood of Summit meeting.

Australian Foreign Minister Casey then made presentation on Australian concern over possibility Indo "unofficially" using force in West Irian asking "SEATO partners seek means of impressing on Indo importance not using force in any form in West Irian dispute". Noted tendency of Indo build-up military forces beyond internal security needs, mentioning Communist jets, naval build-up, et cetera, as well as fact that because of continuation rebellion in North Celebes military forces being concentrated in eastern portion country close proximity West Irian. Australia has "lingering anxiety" that next 12–15 months Indo might, possibly through labor troubles involving approximately 10,000 Indos resident in west tip New Guinea, foment some incident

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WE/4-1159. Secret; Seato; Limit Distribution. Dillon and Parsons had flown to Canberra the evening of April 10.

which could provide basis for "indirect" use of force by Indo. Stressed that while Djuanda and Subandrio have renounced use of force, Sukarno has thus far not made any statement this regard.

Sandys (UK) agreed use of force anywhere in area would "eventually involve us all" and importance of exercising steadying influence on Indo.

Nash (New Zealand) spoke of problem of "competition in supplying arms" between East and West, presumably Indo thus obtaining a greater amount of arms and, because of strength of PKI, possibility all arms would come under control Communists.

Dillon made detailed explanation US policy, pointing out US emphasizes to Indos on all suitable occasions US opposition to attempt bring about any territorial changes by military force or military action in any way. Believe considerable progress has been made in Indonesian attitudes this problem and US appreciation of Indo situation thus little more optimistic than that of Australia. However, US was and would continue as matter of practice make clear to Indos its views on use of force on all suitable occasions. Pointed out that if US refused all Indo requests for arms it would probably result in Soviets sending in many times greater supplies and US would be denied voice which it obtains by supplying some arms. Communist situation in Indo far better than a year ago and leaders appear increasingly to recognize Communist threat as demonstrated by postponement of elections and return to 1945 Constitution. US feels armed forces have generally indicated their anti-Communist attitude and US hopeful trend will continue and develop. Also pointed out importance of training given in US on pol attitudes of Indo army officers.

Sandys supported US views.

Imperial (Philippines) said that although Sukarno apparently "loved by great majority Indo people" attempt had been made on his life and somewhat cryptically asked whether "if something happened to Sukarno" army would be used against Communist elements in Indo. Noted that Nasution[2] was "definitely anti-Communist."

Khoman (Thailand) said that he thought Indo had in UN promised not to use force against West Irian and expressed doubt Indo non-government forces would be sufficient create incident. In his mind real danger being possibility hostilities between Indo and Dutch Government forces.

Qadir (Pakistan) then made statement on Pakistani-Indian frictions, strongly urging search for some third party or parties mediation. Said Pakistan "will accept whatever is decided by an outside body" and for first time, "and perhaps for last time" present regime in Paki-

[2] General Abdul Haris Nasution, Indonesian Minister of Defense and People's Security.

stan is in position to arrive at and accept solution of difficulties with India. Pakistan realized friction between two states was only to advantage Communists; efforts to obtain settlement in UN were always vetoed; UK had advised Pakistan not to go to ICJ as "Commonwealth has own machinery for settling disputes" and Pakistan would accordingly appreciate countries "reflecting on this problem." During course of discussion, Pakistani Representative said he was not seeking any SEATO action, any statement from SEATO, or any propaganda advantage but was rather genuinely seeking some suggestions for solution its problems with India.

Sandys expressed sympathy with Pakistan and pointed out arbitration depended upon agreement both parties.

Imperial then made statement on economic aid, stating that while Philippines "grateful for bilateral aid," if SEATO is to attract uncommitted nations it should reappraise its attitude with regard to economic aid.

Dillon then made extended presentation on US aid policies. Said was sympathetic to Philippine statements and pointed out US desire to favor countries which had declared themselves and undertaken free world defense responsibilities. Pointed out that defense-support appropriations were available only to countries which had undertaken such responsibilities.

With regard to DLF, it was US desire wherever possible, and to maximum possible extent, show additional favor to countries that had been willing to take a clear position between Communist and free world. However, this cannot be sole criteria and it was important that countries submit good projects for consideration. Countries must make real effort, not necessarily a larger financial effort, but in terms of thinking out useful and realistic programs. US aid missions in countries concerned willing to work with governments to this end. In comparing size of US programs in various countries, account should be taken of differing sizes and populations of countries. US attitude toward regional financial institutions had changed since last SEATO meeting. Where states in a region desired multilateral approach on financial matters and were willing to contribute their own resources US was prepared to help or give aid to the extent practicable. Noted President's offer to UN for Near East institution and Arabs had legally created such institution. However, it was not yet effective and it had not indicated that it was interested in USG assistance. This week there had been concluded agreement on an inter-American bank of Latin America and Latin America was subscribing approximately one-half capital with US contributing other half. Latin American portion made up approximately equally of gold or dollars and local currencies. If it was desire of SEA countries, US would be willing to adopt similar policy but must recognize total amount of resources available for this

purpose limited and to extent multilateral aid increased, bilateral aid would have to be decreased. Fully recognized usefulness of identifying SEATO with economic betterment but because geographic distribution of SEATO countries difficult deal with this matter solely within SEATO framework. However, US was willing to consider concrete suggestions and willing to discuss in Council representatives.

Khoman commented that he was glad to hear that DLF loans were based on merits of projects and there were not any advance bloc allocations to individual countries. Also stated he felt size and population of country should not be only factors but should also include responsibilities of countries.

Khoman then made presentation on internal Thai situation, pointing out October 20 movement was supported by King and people. Present government was not "military dictatorship"; out of Cabinet of 15 only 4 were military men; liberties and freedom of people not impaired and movement was necessitated by dilemma of whether it would retain parliamentary system even at cost of permitting Communists disintegrate country or temporarily abandon parliamentary system. Khoman then made factual presentation on relations with Cambodia, pointing to good Thai relations with Burma, Malaya, India, and Indo as refutation Sihanouk's statements Thailand trying to pressure Cambodia join SEATO. Said Thailand will not interfere in Cambodian internal affairs and that he had accepted Cambodian invitation visit Phnom Penh doing so as soon as schedule permitted. [If] Discussions there were favorable, he would recommend Prime Minister Sarit accept Cambodian invitation for visit. Thailand recognizes stability of all countries SEA prerequisite for Thai stability.

Jacquinot (France) welcomed Thai statements and said French estimate was that Cambodia was slowly but surely moving toward free world.

Sandys also welcomed "statesmanlike and moderate" Thai statements; emphasized importance of removing suspicions of countries of area by closer contacts. Read *Pravda* article attacking Wellington meeting and particularly noted *Pravda* statements SEATO was trying force Cambodia give up its neutrality.

In reply to question by Nash as to genuineness German desire for unification, Sandys replied that no German in public life could appear not strongly to favor unification but in hearts many Germans were frightened of possible consequences and others realized unlikelihood of being achieved. Dillon said no indications Soviets would be willing to let go of East Germany or agree to any terms for unification that would be acceptable to West. Jacquinot agreed with Sandys and Dillon and stated that West must be careful avoid appearing to be to blame for failure Germany achieve reunification and must continue to stress unification. In reply to statement by Nash concerning "lurking fear" of

a strong and unified Germany some places in Europe and among Soviets, Sandys pointed out Germany could not be danger so long as associated with others as in NATO and essential Germany continue to be so linked. Danger of Rapacki and other plans looking toward withdrawal Western forces from Germany or neutralization Germany was that Germany was, in fact, too powerful to remain neutral and in playing one side off against another might eventually throw lot in with Soviets.

Meeting closed with general strong affirmation desirability have similar restricted sessions at future Council meetings and scheduling more time for such sessions. Sandys suggested usual opening statements in normal closed sessions not be presented orally but circulated before-hand. Casey suggested Council meetings be extended to five days. Jacquinot agreed. Dillon expressed agreement with value restricted session but stated should not be at expense of regular sessions which also important. Suggested matter be referred to Council representatives for further discussion which was agreed.[3]

[3] The final session of the SEATO Council meeting, held that afternoon, is summarized in telegram 293 from Wellington, April 10. (*Ibid.*, 396.1-WE/4-1059; included in the microfiche supplement) For text of the meeting's communiqué, dated April 10, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 27, 1959, p. 604.

32. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Canberra, April 11, 1959—5 p.m.

448. From Dillon. My overall impression of SEATO meeting was its uneventful character. It was uniformly marked by fine spirit of cooperation and no real differences of opinion came to light. Expected assault on US aid policies and drive to put SEATO in economic development business did not arise, probably due to absence of Serrano. His replacement, the Philippine Ambassador to Australia, appeared to be over his depth and played minor role throughout meeting.

In addition Thanat Khoman was most restrained in this regard during public sessions and in fact stated publicly that US bilateral programs could be considered as fulfillment of obligations under Arti-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 396.1-WE/4-1159. Secret; Seato; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Karachi, Paris (also for USRO), Wellington, London, Manila, Djakarta, Saigon, and Phnom Penh. Passed to CINCPAC POLAD.

cle III. However, in private he shows strong feelings regarding US aid to India in favoring neutralism. Khoman was particularly helpful during meeting uniformly supporting US views whenever there was slightest difference of opinion in discussion. US gave early support to Thai proposal re rural development centers which greatly appreciated by Khoman. Pakistan Qadir was also very friendly merely taking every opportunity to stress Pakistan willingness and ability to accept any arbitrated or neutral decision on differences with India and urging us to do our best with India to take advantage of opportunity for settlement offered by present strong Pakistan Government.

I was pleased to note universal recognition of importance to SEATO of US action in Taiwan Straits last fall and implicit recognition that defense of Taiwan was of direct concern to SEATO. Fact that Nash supported this view was particularly encouraging. It was clear that recent events in Tibet have completely shattered Nash's long-held illusions re Communist China. At one point he said he had not expected such action and frankly no longer knew what to think regarding ChiCom.[2]

Unanimous and strongly held view of Asian partners including Vietnamese representative that SEATO and Western powers in particular should avoid getting out in front on Tibetan matter also significant. They clearly feel this is most important development that can permanently affect thinking in hitherto neutralist Asian countries and wish avoid any action which might upset present trend.

Frank exchange of views at restricted session was particularly useful and interesting. Unanimous view was that there should be more of this at future Council meetings.

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[2] According to Parsons, commenting on the meeting in telegram 449 from Canberra, April 11, Nash had made public remarks to this effect at a luncheon on April 9. "This was open recantation persistent faith that somehow ChiComs less bad than we said. Earlier, thanks to Secretary, yourself and Francis Russell he deferred to us because he did not wish to hurt us in grave matters for which we, not he, had responsibility. Now I think his convictions have been shattered." Parsons concluded: "There was general shock over Tibetan matter but Nash's reaction was the most arresting." (*Ibid.*, 396.1–WE/4–1159) Francis Russell was Ambassador in New Zealand.

33. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

Washington, April 11, 1959—6:20 p.m.

9029. Manila for Parsons. London's 5621.[2]

1. British Embassy informed Department officer April 11 UK considered "fire brigade" leak reflected Reuters report from Wellington unfortunate for two reasons. First it would give wrong impression to bloc and neutralist countries re SEATO intentions. Second it would arouse RLG curiosity as to nature SEATO planning re Laos.

2. Said British understood "fire brigade" intended for use in Laos only in event internal situation got out of hand and not to cope with situation envisaged in Article IV. Had some reservations about idea since such use SEATO forces might provoke violent ChiCom reaction, offend neutral Asian opinion and raise Geneva Accords question. Had therefore hoped such planning would not become known outside SEATO. Considered it fortunate press reports did not describe true nature planning but rather implied it concerned with Article IV situation.

3. Stated Foreign Office planned response any press inquiries by giving background information along following lines:

a) Press mention Laos as "hot spot" difficult understand since no military action of any kind in progress there. Viet Minh forces apparently crossed Lao border and installed themselves in Lao territory early in year but no shots fired. No suggestion RLG considered itself immediately threatened or appealing for foreign aid against aggression.

b) Laos protocol state and action under Article IV could be taken only in event aggression and then only at invitation of or with consent RLG.

c) Continuous process military planning goes on in SEATO as in other regional defense organizations. Such planning must provide for all eventualities in SEATO area and existence plans does not imply circumstances in which they might be used likely arise.

4. British Embassy further indicated any reply to RLG queries re nature SEATO planning this subject should be somewhat evasive and intended discourage further publicity and in general deflate matter.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/4–1059. Secret. Drafted in SEA and approved by Robertson. Repeated to Vientiane, Wellington, Bangkok, Manila, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 5261, April 10, the Embassy described learning from a Foreign Office official of British concern over press leaks from Wellington regarding SEATO planning for special forces including "UK and Australian contingents earmarked for special use in Laos." (*Ibid.*, 790.5/4–1059)

Suggested line that all SEATO planning hypothetical and no decisions by governments would be made until exact circumstances any situation arising known.

5. Department officer expressed initial reaction that British views set forth paragraphs 3 and 4 above seemed reasonable.

6. Department subsequently confirmed this initial reaction to British Embassy.

Herter

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34. Telegram From the Embassy in Indonesia to the Department of State[1]

Djakarta, May 11, 1959—11 a.m.

3403. Pote Sarasin, Secretary General SEATO, told Ambassador Byington[2] and me in Bangkok May 8 during courtesy call that he had had most satisfactory talk with Ne Win in Rangoon recently, during which Ne Win expressed appreciation for SEATO but reiterated Burmese had to be careful not to antagonize powerful neighbor to north. Much to Sarasin's surprise, Ne Win seemed to fear India almost as much as Communist China. Every time Sarasin talked about danger from China Ne Win reverted to India. He was particularly concerned over what might happen in India after Nehru's balancing influence had been removed from scene, Sarasin said.

I asked whether he thought Ne Win was talking about possibility of military aggression or economic and political expansionism. Sarasin said he believed had latter in mind.

Jones

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/5–1159. Confidential. Repeated to Bangkok, New Delhi, and Rangoon.

[2] Homer Byington, Ambassador in Malaya.

35. Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Department of State[1]

Pearl Harbor, T.H., May 29, 1959—2 p.m.

300100Z. Personal for Asst Sec Parsons from Felt. Your 21 May 10 pm (received by NAVCOMMSTA 281859Z and passed by NAVCOMMSTA as 282145Z)[2] received 29 May which explains delay my reply.

1. I agree that clear and forceful statement of roles and missions for indigenous forces is vital to defense of our military assistance program this area. With exception Cambodia, these statements already approved or awaiting approval of JCS. Am studying proposed Cambodian statement now prior submission to JCS. Have recommended these statements be incorporated in DOD MAP guidance and that they be provided OCB for use in development national policy guidance.

2. Suggest Philippines as excellent illustrative case to convince Congress that we assisting in development indigenous forces solely in accordance U.S. concepts for strategic defense of area. Believe you and SecDef have all background info showing disparity between Filipino concepts and requirements and those reflected by our planned force goals and missions for Phil armed forces.

3. Believe it advisable to stress, at risk of repetition, the objectives and criteria which govern MAP in the PACOM and which I reemphasized at recent conference with my MAAG chiefs and principal commanders. The fundamental objectives of MAP are:

A. To provide the means to maintain internal security.

B. To insure minimum ready forces to meet overt Communist aggression in a limited war situation and to conduct defensive delaying action while the forces of the U.S. and other allies are brought to bear. The criteria for granting U.S. aid are:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5–MSP/5–3059. Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution.

[2] This unnumbered telegram, marked "No Distribution Outside Department" and "Limit Distribution for Admiral Felt from Parsons," reads as follows:

"Question of FE country force goals and missions likely come up in course appearances I may have to make next two or three weeks before Foreign Relations and possibly other Committees. Recalling your remarks and Under Secretary Dillon's remarks at Baguio re importance making complete, forceful, sound definition roles and missions, I would much appreciate receiving on personal informal basis any suggestions and views you might care to pass on to me re answering anticipated questions. Will use them only for background and on unattributed basis. Believe it particularly useful if you could give overall basic arguments for currently planned goals, especially ROK and GRC, particularly in light Senator Mansfield's recent statements and current interest economic (DLF) as opposed military aid (including defense support). Would appreciate reply by May 25." (*Ibid.*, 790.5–MSP/5–2159) Mike Mansfield of Montana was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

a. It must be needed by peoples to maintain their freedom.

b. Recipients must be able to use it effectively in consonance with U.S. strategic objectives and policies.

c. It is emergency aid.

d. We are not providing assistance for use by one free country against another free country.

4. Planned force goals for PACOM indigenous forces, together with my basic arguments in support thereof, are held by JCS. Suggest you contact LtGen Picher, Director Joint Staff for info this subj. Also, current studies which substantiate force goals for ROK forces have just been made available by Gen. Decker to me and to OSD/ISA.

5. With reference Senator Mansfield's statements, assume you refer his proposal for 3 year program of de-emphasis military aid and shift from economic grants to loans. I prefer Senator Carlson's[3] more reasonable observation in which he reportedly finds "a lot of merit" in proceeding now to contemplate the character of the MSP "on a long-term basis." My long range MAP planning must necessarily be predicated on some tenuous assumptions which are dependent on factors controlled by our economic (including defense support) programs. For example, future force goals for Vietnam will be greatly influenced by the effectiveness of the Civil Guard and the existence of an adequate road and telecommunications net. I still insist there can be no early de-emphasis on military assistance while we face the present internal security threat in South East Asia and the threat of external aggression throughout this area. Any relaxation of current emphasis on security will open the door to Communist pressures, both overt and covert, which can forestall economic development in these nations unless they accommodate to the Communist colonial empire. John Steeves' paper which he presented at Baguio should provide you with some fine material on this point.

6. Any major shift from grant economic aid to loans must be on a carefully considered case-by-case basis to avoid playing right into Communist hands, particularly in those countries which are either deplorably underdeveloped or sitting astride the fence.

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[3] Frank Carlson of Kansas, member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

36. Memorandum of Discussion at the 410th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, June 18, 1959[1]

[Here follows a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting.]

1. *Political Implications of Afro-Asian Military Takeovers* (NSC 5820/1;[2] NSC 5429/5;[3] NSC 5701;[4] NSC 5809;[5] Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated May 22, 1959[6])

Mr. Gray explained the background of the State Department presentation and before calling on Mr. Ramsey[7] asked Secretary Dillon if he wished to make any comments on the State Department paper which was to be summarized by Mr. Ramsey. (A copy of Mr. Gray's introductory remarks are filed in the Minutes of the Meeting and another is attached to this Memorandum.)[8]

Secretary Dillon replied that he merely wished to point out that the study to be discussed by Mr. Ramsey was simply a working level paper in the State Department, prepared for that Department's own use. While the paper also generally reflected State Department views at the top levels, Secretary Dillon emphasized that the higher officials at the State Department have not as yet adopted from the paper any detailed conclusions on U.S. policy with respect to this subject.

Mr. Ramsey thereupon presented his report. (A copy of the summary of conclusions, along the lines presented by Mr. Ramsey is attached to this Memorandum. The entire study is filed in the Minutes of the Meeting.)

At the conclusion of Mr. Ramsey's presentation, the President stated that while he did not wish to comment on the validity of Mr. Ramsey's conclusions, he did wish to say that Mr. Ramsey's report was the finest report which he had ever heard given before the Na-

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Gleason.

[2] Entitled "U.S. Policy in the Near East," October 3, 1958; scheduled for publication in volume XII.

[3] Entitled "Current U.S. Policy in the Far East," December 22, 1954; *Foreign Relations*, 1952–1954, vol. XII, Part 1, pp. 1062–1074.

[4] Entitled "U.S. Policy Toward South Asia," January 10, 1957; *ibid.*, 1955–1957, vol. VIII, pp. 29–43.

[5] Document 12.

[6] Not found. It transmitted a Department of State study entitled "Political Implications of Afro-Asian Military Takeovers," dated May 22. The section of this study entitled "Summary of Conclusions" is included in the microfiche supplement. A copy of the full study (as revised May 28) is filed as Enclosure 1 to instruction CA–1333, August 11. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.90/8–1159)

[7] Henry C. Ramsey of the Policy Planning Staff.

[8] Not printed. In these remarks, Gray stated that the study had been undertaken at his request, and that the Planning Board had discussed the paper without either endorsing or rejecting its conclusions. The text of the remarks is included in the microfiche supplement.

tional Security Council. It was, said the President, a fine paper, beautifully organized, and he wished to congratulate Mr. Ramsey. The President inquired whether there were any questions on the report from the members of the Council.

Secretary McElroy pointed out that it had been generally true that military leadership has basically represented a conservative element in the societies of the newly developing countries. While in some instances, the military can be troublesome, it remained true that in these backward societies, it was desirable to encourage the military to stabilize a conservative system. Secretary McElroy cited the contribution of Nasution in Indonesia. Secretary McElroy also said that Mr. Ramsey's report raised an important question as to whether we should provide at least a minimum of military assistance to these backward and undeveloped countries simply as a means of helping to provide stability. If the State Department were ultimately to follow this conclusion as a basic policy, it would of course be necessary to make the Senate Foreign Relations Committee aware of the fact.

The President observed that Mr. Ramsey's report had raised in his mind an even larger question. He then pointed out that for the last two and a half years of Secretary Dulles's life, the Secretary in intimate conversations with the President from time to time had come to the conclusion that we have not yet seen the ending of the test of free government in the world. Can our system of free government stand the strains which it must endure because of our tolerance of pressure groups and other kinds of uninformed thinking?

The President then went on to emphasize a dilemma which constantly faced his Administration. On the one hand, we were anxious to keep our economy strong and stable and to balance our budget. On the other hand, we seemed to be in need of doing more to assist such backward countries as Mr. Ramsey had been describing in this report. Emphasizing again that this was a serious problem, the President referred to his recent conversations with Ambassador Bunker[9] about the serious competition from the Soviets which we were facing in India. He agreed wholeheartedly with Ambassador Bunker in the latter's serious view of this competition. Not the least of the dangers was the terrific propaganda campaign that the Soviet Union was waging against us in India. All this, said the President, reaffirms Secretary Dulles's view that we have not yet seen the ultimate test of the strength of free governments in the world.

Admiral Burke, commenting on the President's statement, said that he felt that what was most essential to the preservation of freedom was the development of a feeling of responsibility by the members of governing groups. If no such feeling of responsibility was

[9] Ellsworth Bunker, Ambassador in India.

developed and instead people gave free reign to irresponsible criticism, free government would certainly succumb in the end. Accordingly, it seemed essential to Admiral Burke that the U.S. assist in the training of the young people of these backward countries so that they could develop the requisite sense of responsibility.

Mr. Allen Dulles reminded Admiral Burke that he had written a letter to him last October on the developing trend towards military autocracy in several of the Afro-Asian countries. In this letter Mr. Dulles said that he had stressed the need for our military attachés and for the personnel of our Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs) to be carefully selected so that they could develop useful and appropriate relationships with the rising military leaders and factions in the underdeveloped countries to which they were assigned. While Admiral Burke had not replied to this letter, Mr. Dulles said he knew that Admiral Burke had been working on this matter. Mr. Dulles commented that the revolution in Iraq had come as a terrible shock and that he had started a review of our military relationships in the Afro-Asian countries as a result.

The President remarked that the rising young military leaders in these underdeveloped countries could probably be most effectively influenced by our MAAG personnel. He expressed vigorous support for Mr. Dulles's views and suggested that it would be desirable for us to have more civilian instructors in our higher military schools in order to instruct our own military people on the importance of other than purely military considerations in their relationships with their opposite numbers in the underdeveloped countries. Secretary McElroy agreed with the President's point but also suggested that it was important to bring the military leaders of these countries to the U.S. for training.

Secretary Dillon expressed the view that Congress would probably pose no objections to such training as the President and the other speakers had been suggesting nor would Congress probably object to providing these underdeveloped countries at least a modicum of armament in order to assist in maintaining stability. On the other hand, Congress would certainly object vigorously to providing heavy armament and big equipment to many of the underdeveloped countries.

Mr. Gray pointed out that in a great many of our NSC policy papers dealing with separate countries, there appeared boiler-plate language with respect to objectives calling for "strong, stable democratic governments with a pro-Western orientation." This struck Mr. Gray as being basically nothing more than an expression of the desirability of exporting our own democratic institutions. As Mr. Ramsey's paper indicated, this was not always going to be possible and we must look into these objectives more carefully in the future. The State Department would certainly not want to address itself to following up Mr. Ramsey's study. Mr. Gray also alluded to the fact that the Depart-

ment of Defense had established a school for training MAAG personnel. Similarly, he pointed out that of the twelve countries which were now receiving defense support from the U.S., eleven were actually underdeveloped Asian countries. This suggested to Mr. Gray a further look at the content of the programs of study which are prescribed for military personnel from these countries who are studying in the U.S.

The President endorsed Mr. Gray's suggestions and stated that it seemed to him likely that the trend towards military take-overs in the underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa was almost certainly going to continue. Accordingly, we must do our best to orient the potential military leaders of these countries in a pro-Western rather than in a pro-Communist direction. In support of this proposition, the President cited his own experience in the Philippines. He believed that if we had not trained the Filipinos in democracy for some forty years, the Philippines would now have become a military dictatorship.

Admiral Burke pointed out that with respect to the comments on our higher military schools, at least fifty per cent of the teaching in such schools is now oriented towards the development of a philosophy of government rather than to purely military or tactical matters. Foreign personnel studying in these schools are pretty well oriented toward democracy when they return to their own countries.

The President went on to say that we should all stay closer together in these matters. We should indoctrinate all our attachés—military, commercial, agricultural, and others—so that they each will have a background or a philosophy which he actually exemplifies in his daily life.

The President looked over at Mr. Clarence Randall and said he thought that Mr. Randall probably had some ideas on this subject. Mr. Randall replied that he had actually been bursting to speak his piece. He felt that the Council had just engaged in the biggest issue which he had heard discussed in this body in a very long time. He said he was doubtless in a small minority but that it was his belief that Mr. Ramsey's paper was much too complacent. He detected in it too much readiness to give up pushing for the democratic ideal. Mr. Randall insisted that what he wanted to see was more and better education for civilians in these backward countries. In his opinion more than any other single factor, it was Robert College[10] that had brought Turkey to the healthy state in which it found itself today. Similarly, the American University in Beirut had accomplished wonders for democracy in the Near East. He believed that institutions like these profoundly advanced our American and Western ideals in the areas in which they were located. He only wished that we could have another such institution to serve Africa South of the Sahara.

[10] In Istanbul.

There ensued a brief discussion in which the President thought that the American University in Beirut was under considerable Communist influence inasmuch as a few years ago the University had advised against having Secretary Dulles visit and make a speech at the University. Mr. George Allen said that he thought that the attacks on Secretary Dulles came rather from pro-Nasser than from pro-Communist students at the American University in Beirut.

In any event, continued the President, he was all for Mr. Randall's idea. However, if you go and live with these Arabs, you will find that they simply cannot understand our ideas of freedom or human dignity. They have lived so long under dictatorships of one form or another, how can we expect them to run successfully a free government? Mr. Randall replied that there was a real chance for free governments in the region of Africa South of the Sahara. Linked with this was the economic question—whether the U.S. should provide considerable economic assistance to socialist economies in the underdeveloped countries. It seemed obvious to Mr. Randall that in certain instances, we would have to provide assistance to states with socialist economies in the overall interests of our national security. Nevertheless, we should always and persistently exert pressure in favor of the free enterprise system. The President commented that here too he was glad to go along with Mr. Randall's idea.

Secretary Dillon in defense of the State Department report, pointed out that the report was not endorsing the continuation of military regimes forever in these underdeveloped countries. The report was merely insisting that in the short range, parliamentary democracy simply will not work in these countries as it works in the U.S. Accordingly, our best bet was to try to civilianize these military regimes as far as possible in the interest of the ultimate victory of democratic government. Apropos of Secretary Dillon's remarks, the President pointed out that the so-called colonial powers had often taken the position, not that their colonies should never become free countries, but that before these colonies did become free countries their citizens should be trained for freedom. It was indeed pretty difficult if such colonies became independent before they had trained any of their people in the art of government.

Mr. George Allen recalled the views expressed by the Vice President when he had returned from his trip to Latin America.[11] The Vice President had taken the position that, as between dictatorial and democratic regimes in Latin America, the U.S. ought to adopt a policy of being a little more friendly to the democratic regimes. This was at least, as Secretary Dillon had suggested, the ideal to keep in mind as our ultimate goal.

[11] Vice President Nixon visited South America April 27–May 15, 1958.

The President alluded to what he called the paradoxical situation in Nicaragua. After years of a heavy-handed dictatorship organized by his father, the young Somoza had permitted and encouraged the development of a number of freedoms in Nicaragua such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the like. For his pains Luis Somoza was now confronted by a revolution against his relatively mild authoritarian regime.

The Director of the Bureau of the Budget said that it seemed to him that Mr. Ramsey's report did not really evaluate two potential risks in the trend toward military take-overs in these underdeveloped countries. The first of these two risks was whether there would not be an increased danger of Communist subversion when a government in one of these countries became heavily centralized. The second risk might come from the fact that the increased power of a military ruling caste in one of these countries could result in aggression by this country against its neighbors. Mr. Stans wondered whether these two risks had been considered by those who had drafted the State Department paper. The President replied that he was quite sure that these risks had been calculated and asked Mr. Ramsey who likewise replied in the affirmative. Mr. Ramsey added that the second risk was more controllable than the first.

(At this point, 9:55 a.m., the President and Secretary Dillon left the meeting for a short time.)

The National Security Council:[12]

a. Discussed the subject on the basis of an oral summary by Mr. Henry C. Ramsey, Department of State, of the study transmitted by the reference memorandum of May 22, 1959.

b. Noted that the Department of State would continue follow-up studies on the subject in the light of the study and the discussion, and that the NSC Planning Board would take the latter into account in preparing policy recommendations with regard to the Afro-Asian area.

Note: The action in b above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State.

[Here follow the remaining items.]

S. Everett Gleason

[12] Paragraphs a and b and the Note that follows constitute NSC Action No. 2098. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

37. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, August 31, 1959—8:28 p.m.

470. Re Embtel 503 repeated Vientiane 68[2] and CINCPAC 36.[3] Suggest in your discretion you might take line in restricted session September 2 that although we see no immediate probability SEATO being called upon to intervene in Laos situation, and hope this can be avoided, if situation does deteriorate suddenly and drastically SEATO may receive appeal for assistance in face of which it could be called upon to act quickly and decisively. Such action might be required in several fields including military, political and psychological. Council Reps may therefore consider appropriate to discuss where SEATO would stand in such circumstances and what plans can now be developed enable organization step in effectively if called upon.

Among possible topics which might be discussed could be the following:

1. Necessity for refinement and updating of MS/147/13/59.[4]

2. Political factors which might enter into effort and ensure SEATO receives maximum freedom of action in meeting Lao request for assistance, including interrelationship potential SEATO courses of action with possible simultaneous consideration of problem UN. Scope and degree of support UN membership would be of particular importance.

3. Psychological factors which must be contended with in rallying support of world opinion and in countering inevitable Communist propaganda attacks against SEATO in consequence its action.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/8–2859. Secret; Niact. Drafted in FE; cleared with Parsons, in IO/UNP, and in substance with OSD/ISA; and approved by Murphy. Repeated to Vientiane and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 503 from Bangkok, August 28, Johnson stated he had informed Pote Sarasin that the United States favored a special meeting of the SEATO Council Representatives on September 2 to discuss the situation in Laos. (*Ibid.*, 790.5/8–2859) He had been instructed to do so in order to "further emphasize seriousness with which we view situation in Laos." (Telegram 433 to Bangkok, August 26; *ibid.*, 790.5/8–2659)

[3] Not found.

[4] Reference is to SEATO contingency plan MPO 5B/59, dated July 13. This was a contingency plan for the introduction and maintenance of a SEATO force to assist the Lao Government in countering Communist insurgency in a contingency in which: a) the Lao Government appealed to SEATO for assistance; b) the SEATO Council consented to the request on condition that it and the Lao Government jointly agreed on the mission of the SEATO force and overall direction of operations remained the responsibility of the Lao Government; c) the Council invited a member nation, to be known as the "appointed nation," to be responsible to it for the conduct of operations by the SEATO force; and d) Communist countries were not overtly intervening in Laos, but were covertly providing possible support to the insurgents. (Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S–2–59)

Aside from above and any other points you may deem appropriate, suggest you may wish discuss latest actual reports situation Laos. Department requests Embassy Vientiane supply you direct latest analysis of situation for such use.

Issuance of appropriately worded communiqué could have advantage dampening down overplay of speculation and of helping to ensure that everybody says same thing about what transpired at restricted session. As we assume fact of meeting will be known to the Communists, Department sees no need to publicize for that purpose. We accordingly could go along with any communiqué written in very low key or with agreement among delegates that, if queried about meeting, they will say meeting was held to discuss developments in area since last meeting and that they will refuse to be drawn out further.

Dillon

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38. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, September 2, 1959—8 p.m.

549. At Council representatives restricted meeting this afternoon I strongly urged importance discussion contingency planning against possibility RLG appeal for SEATO assistance, taking line contained Department's 470 (repeated only Vientiane and CINCPAC).[2] Made liberal and effective use of Vientiane's 496 and 497 to Department.[3] Information contained these latter telegrams had not yet been received by any other Council representatives and served shock them out of complacent assumption that Laotian situation could be relied upon drift along with little possibility anyone required make any hard decisions.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–259. Secret; Priority; Seato. Also sent priority to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Vientiane, Saigon, Phnom Penh, London, Paris, Manila, Canberra, and Wellington.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Both dated September 1, telegrams 496 and 497 reported on reverses suffered by Royal Government troops at the hands of opposing forces, some of which were alleged to have entered Laos from North Vietnam. In telegram 496, Ambassador Smith stated his belief that the attack had "grave implications." (Both in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–159) See also footnote 2, Document 253.

As other representatives were reluctant enter into any meaningful discussion without instructions, no decisions were reached except to recommend to governments urgent attention be given to matter and instructions requested that would permit meaningful discussion, if possible, at another meeting to be held prior to scheduled September 15 meeting. During course discussion I especially pointed out pertinence MS/147/13/59 to present situation, suggesting representatives urge on their governments importance giving necessary instructions to MPO and military advisors permit agreement at earliest possible date. Chief MPO,[4] who was present, confirmed to Council representatives that presently no agreed military plan existed if SEATO decided reply affirmatively to an appeal from Laos. Chief MPO also pointed out necessity for governmental decisions as set forth paragraph 14 enclosure 1 to MS/147/13/59.[5]

As some representatives, particularly UK and France, opposed issuance any communiqué, correctly pointing out communiqué is not normally issued following Council representatives meetings; agreement was reached that if questioned by press, Secretary General authorized to say that Council representatives held their usual discussion of developments in the treaty area. If asked whether Laos was discussed, he was authorized to reply affirmatively pointing out it was "a part of the treaty area". UK suggestion also adopted that SG be authorized to state: "that organization is watching events in Laos closely but no action seems called for as things stand".

During course of discussion I mentioned reply contained Deptel 480 Department intends to make to inquiries.[6]

More detailed account follows.[7]

Johnson

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[4] Brigadier L.W. Thornton of New Zealand.

[5] This paragraph pointed out the necessity for prior agreement on specific matters regarding the SEATO force so that implementation of the plan not be delayed. (MPO Plan 5B/59 (MS/147/13/59), July 13; Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S–2–59)

[6] In telegram 480, September 1, the Department stated its intention to reply to press inquiries that it anticipated that the Council Representatives would meet that week for a general review of the Communist threat to the SEATO area, during which it could be expected to assess the Lao situation. "Department is emphasizing privately to pressmen that SEATO very much in background re Laos and probably will remain so unless situation changes markedly." (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–159)

[7] Telegram 574 from Bangkok, September 3. In it, Johnson reported that the French Representative at the meeting had disparaged reports that recent insurgent action in Laos included the use of training areas in Vietnam, and stated that in the absence of external interference in Laos, the issue would be one for the United Nations. Johnson noted that he had agreed to the latter assertion, but pointed out that SEATO was obliged to consider various contingencies under which Laos might seek help. (*Ibid.*, 790.5/9–359)

39. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, September 5, 1959—12:47 a.m.

537. Acting Secretary this afternoon[2] called meeting of heads local SEATO diplomatic missions to review situation Laos, to request they alert governments to our concern over recent developments and solicit views as to how Laotian problem should be handled.[3] Résumé based on uncleared notes follows:

Pointed out that although Laotian Government had made sudden and uncoordinated appeal to UN render military assistance, hard facts of direct outside support rebels lacking. While threat to Laos appeared serious, we needed better evidence than now available support Laotian case UN.

Acting Secretary stated U.S. belief it preferable UN be allowed handle Lao appeal and believed Security Council should take action prior any intervention SEATO. Nevertheless SEATO should urgently consider situation Laos and what action it might take if Lao appeal directed to it. As example, SEATO Council Reps Bangkok might recommend sending fact-finders into Laos report developments there. He foresaw possibility also U.S. might receive unilateral approach from Laos for military assistance but stated our preference for acting through regional organizations where possible.

U.K. rep.[4] stated his Government's view that since Laotians had now made appeal U.K. and it appeared Security Council would soon debate question, would be unfortunate if appeal made SEATO as well. Immediate problem is how matter should be handled UN. U.K. considered any thought of sending forces Laos should be deferred until facts of situation there established. Acting Secretary agreed and again stressed importance SEATO not standing idly by and necessity of having facts if called on to act. Hoped reactions SEATO governments could be received by their representatives in Washington in time for further meeting (suggested by Australian)[5] September 7 at 11 A.M.,[6] after which Acting Secretary believed urgent steps should be taken initiate action through Council Reps Bangkok to establish procedure

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–559. Secret; Priority; Seato. Drafted by Arthur B. Emmons on September 4 and approved by Parsons. Also sent priority to Bangkok, Canberra, Karachi, London, Manila, Paris, and Wellington and repeated to Vientiane, CINCPAC for POLAD, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and New Delhi.

[2] September 4.

[3] A memorandum of this conversation by Emmons is included in the microfiche supplement.

[4] Lord Hood, Minister of the British Embassy.

[5] Ambassador Beale.

[6] See *infra*.

for SEATO fact-finding mission Laos. FYI. Sending of such mission would of course imply prior Laotian agreement. End FYI. Suggested Council Reps meeting might best be called by Thai or SYG.

In reply to inquiry of French rep, Acting Secretary stated SEATO fact-finding mission would not conflict any UN action and would clearly show degree SEATO concern. FYI. No mention made at meeting of RLG intentions (reported Vientiane's 536 to Department)[7] to request SEATO intervention. End FYI.

Request at your discretion you discuss foregoing urgently with FonOff, pressing them instruct missions here in time for meeting September 7.

Dillon

[7] Dated September 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459)

40. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, September 7, 1959, 11 a.m.[1]

SUBJECT

Second Meeting on Laos of Representatives of SEATO Diplomatic Missions in Washington, September 7, 1959, 11:00 A.M.

PARTICIPANTS

See attached list[2]

The Acting Secretary opened the meeting by recalling that some of those present had suggested a follow-up to last Friday's meeting. He thought it would be useful to begin by giving out latest information from Laos. He had pointed out on Friday that, while we were pretty certain of intervention from North Vietnam as claimed by Laos, there was a dearth of hard evidence. Since then the U.S. has come to the conclusion that the evidence of North Vietnam intervention is definitive. This evidence includes the use by the rebel forces of mortars and recoilless rifles which clearly come from outside. The operations of the rebel units also give evidence that they are well-trained units. They have used flares to give the signal for starting and stopping mortar fire and to start a well-coordinated infantry attack. Evidence will be pre-

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by Howard D. Jones, Adviser to the Special Assistant for SEATO Affairs.

[2] Not printed.

sented to the UN today that North Vietnam intervened in Laos and is continuing to supply and support the rebels. There have been strong indications in individual reports that Viet-Minh nationals have participated in rebel operations within Laos but there is no conclusive proof of this. As for the present situation there has not yet been any broad contact between the RLG forces and the rebels since the RLG forces avoided contact by withdrawing to the area of Sam Neua. Some trails in the surrounding area have been cut by the rebels. There have been further incursions the last few days in Phong Saly.

The Acting Secretary expressed the belief that a proposal to send UN observers to Laos is in good shape. It has the concurrence of the UN Secretary General. The Security Council may agree at its meeting today to send a fact-finding mission to Laos. This would be done by organizing a sub-committee to find facts without having authority to make recommendations. Such a sub-committee comes under Article 29 of the UN Charter and, as a procedural matter, is not subject to veto. Mr. Dillon stated that we hope that action on this proposal can be completed today and that this will provide a deterrent to further use of force. He said that at least two members of the Security Council might be suitable for such a mission—Italy and Japan. Both have indicated their willingness to form part of such a sub-committee. The U.S. hopes that a Latin American Government—possibly Argentina—will also agree this afternoon and Tunisia is another possibility.

The Acting Secretary noted that there has been some indication Laos might appeal to SEATO. Such an appeal was almost made but has been held in abeyance. It is ready in draft form in Bangkok. Mr. Dillon said he hoped it will not be necessary for Laos to make this appeal—that the UN approach will be effective. He suggested that it is particularly important for SEATO to be prepared with a united position on the facts if North Vietnam uses this occasion to defy both the UN and SEATO. Some members of SEATO may not be fully advised of the situation because of lack of communications or absence of representation in Laos. Mr. Dillon thought it would be desirable for such members to send persons in whom they have confidence to Laos on an individual basis—not as SEATO fact-finders. He said that he understood that the U.K. has asked Sir Robert Scott to go to Vientiane to make a report on the situation. An additional idea is that SEATO Secretary General Sarasin might visit Vientiane if he felt it desirable. Advantages would be that he could report the facts, give the RLG the feeling that SEATO is showing interest in this problem, and he could also exercise a moderating influence on the RLG. The U.S. believes it desirable for the SEATO Council Representatives to hold meetings in Bangkok as developments warrant. Such meetings need not be publicized and may be informal in nature. He noted that such an informal meeting is scheduled today at which the Secretary General is to report

on his talks with the Foreign Minister of Laos. The Acting Secretary suggested that it is better to make Bangkok rather than Washington the focus of continuing talks.

In concluding his presentation Mr. Dillon repeated his hope that any country not sure of the facts would send a representative or representatives in whom it had confidence to Laos. There would be no need to publicize the sending of such representatives.

The Thai Ambassador[3] then stated that his government views the situation with grave concern. If Laos asks SEATO for help the Organization should do all it can to help Laos and to defend the Treaty Area countries. Thailand favors a special meeting of the Council Representatives in Bangkok (which the Ambassador noted had been scheduled for today after he received his instructions).[4] The Thai Government would support any decision by the Council Representatives to send fact-finding representatives to Laos.

Mr. Shaikh[5] said that the Pakistan Government believes that the first order of business is to find out the facts. His government has had no hard evidence of incursions into Laos from outside but he had noted with interest Mr. Dillon's comments on this point. Pakistan thinks that all other avenues should be fully exploited before SEATO "rushes in". Pakistan favors the UN fact-finding idea.

Ambassador Romulo stated that he had no instructions from his government but he thinks the UN proposal is proper and would have the support of the Philippines.

Ambassador Beale thought Australia would oppose sending SEATO representatives as a group to Laos but the Ministry of External Affairs may send someone from Bangkok to strengthen its representation in Laos. He said that he was in general agreement with what Mr. Dillon had said.

Ambassador Caccia indicated he also agreed generally with the Acting Secretary. The U.K. believes that the key action now rests with the UN but thinks the Council Representatives should meet as necessary and keep up with the situation. He had no instructions on the suggestion that Mr. Sarasin might visit Vientiane but said that surely the Secretary General will take instructions from "his Council" on this point.

Mr. Winckler[6] stated that France does not favor confusing UN action with SEATO. France would prefer not to have communiqués on SEATO meetings on Laos.

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[3] Visutr Arthayukti.

[4] An account of this meeting of the Council Representatives is in telegram 611 from Bangkok, September 7. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–759; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] M.S. Shaikh, Chargé of the Pakistani Embassy.

[6] Jean-Claude Winckler, Chargé of the French Embassy.

Mr. Miller[7] of New Zealand indicated general agreement with what had been said. New Zealand believes that Laos has given priority to its appeal to the UN and this should take precedence over any action by SEATO. SEATO should keep the situation under close and continuing attention and member nations should give support to UN action. New Zealand does not think that the necessary evidence of external aggression is available.

The Acting Secretary summed up by stating that he felt the member nations were all pretty much in agreement. He welcomed the statement that Australia is planning to strengthen its representation in Vientiane. He said he did not propose to issue a communiqué but noted that the press will undoubtedly inquire about the meeting. He proposed to respond to press inquiries simply by acknowledging, as agreed last Friday, that SEATO nation representatives had met to discuss the latest developments in Laos. He noted that it had been suggested that the U.S. prepare a paper on the evidence we had of outside aggression. He said this paper would be prepared and made available to the group.

[7] R.M. Miller, First Secretary of the New Zealand Embassy.

41. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, September 9, 1959—10 p.m.

641. Department telegram 553 repeated to addressees.[2] I first saw Pote Sarasin with respect reference telegram and subsequently today had more than 2-hour session with Prime Minister at which Pote Sarasin was present together with Prince Wongsan, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Reaction of both Pote and Sarit to numbered paragraph 5[3] reference telegram was gratification and relief at having this clear indication of US attitude. While much my conversation with Sarit was directed toward getting as clear understanding as I could of

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–959. Top Secret; Priority; Limited Distribution; Seato. Repeated priority to Canberra, Karachi, London, Manila, Paris, Wellington, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Dated September 7. (*Ibid.*, 790.5/9–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] This paragraph noted that the Embassy could inform Pote and Sarit in confidence that whether or not SEATO was organizationally prepared to act immediately on a Lao request for military assistance, the United States was making preliminary dispositions of U.S. forces in the Pacific.

what degree he would be willing to be in "forefront" militarily against background assurances contained numbered paragraph 5, I was not successful in pinning him down. However, he assured me Thailand would take no action in Laos without prior consultation with US.

In view of Sarit's unwillingness to be pinned down and as this was our first really substantive conversation looking toward possibility military action in Laos, I did not feel it desirable to try to press him too far but rather to plant thoughts which I hope will germinate.

In my first separate conversation with Pote he expressed view that it would be grave mistake for foreign troops, Thai or US, to become involved in "shooting Laotians in Laos." That is, he felt that essential element for overt foreign military intervention must be to repel aggression by Viet Minh personnel. Undoubted fact that Viet Minh were training, supplying and inciting dissidence in Laos was not enough to justify overt foreign intervention, and intervention under such circumstances probably would not be successful. Even though supported from without, RLG should be able to deal with internal dissidence without overt intervention of foreign forces. However, Pote had no answer as to what can and should be done to prevent steady whittling away of RLG position under these circumstances to point Laos falls to Communists. He recognizes this possibility and recognizes effect on Thailand and SEATO would be almost equally disastrous as if fall had come through overt Viet Minh invasion.

Sarit had done no thinking in terms intervention for purpose preventing fall Phong Saly and Sam Neua. He indicated Phoumi[4] had asked him to bomb enemy around Sam Neua but he felt this was "foolish" and had refused even consider. As far as Thai action concerned, Sarit has been thinking in following terms:

(1) If Phong Saly and Sam Neua fell, he would wait to see whether "they" moved any further towards Thailand;
(2) If "they" moved further, he would move Thai forces to border; and
(3) If "they" did not stop, he would move into Laos.

He seems to discount effect on morale RLG loss of Phong Saly and Sam Neua, relying on conviction that in this event FAL would stage a coup and take over government. He says such a coup is planned by Phoumi, Ouan and Sunthorn (latter spelling phonetic from Thai). Apparently on his trip here early this week Phoumi had asked Sarit for "money and guns" to support a coup if it became necessary. However, Sarit said that he had not agreed. I, of course, pointed out desirability such action at this time, and that we were supplying "guns" to FAL as rapidly as they could be absorbed. Sarit asked who

[4] Phoumi Nosavan, Laotian Secretary of State for National Defense and Veterans Affairs.

was supervising distribution as he had heard rumor a shipment had fallen into hands of Communists. I said that I was sure that American personnel in Laos were supervising distribution and I knew of no American arms that had fallen into hands of Communists except isolated instances in which PL may have captured individual arms from FAL personnel.

I suggested to Sarit it important if at all possible prevent Phong Saly and Sam Neua fall, and that there were many additional things short of overt intervention that could be done assist RLG and FAL. Sarit agreed but said that he did not know what FAL wanted. He had agreed to Phoumi's request for training FAL PARU troops in Thailand and for "staff planning coordination." He was also sending a group of two or three officers to Vientiane in next few days. Perhaps he would have clear idea when these conversations finished. He said also while he had agreed to principle training FAL PARU units Phoumi had not given him very clear idea exactly what was wanted and detailed arrangements apparently not yet discussed. I emphasized we were prepared immediately assist any way possible when we knew what FAL and RTA wanted. Upshot this portion conversation was remark by Sarit that perhaps also better get Phoumi back down to Bangkok to find out what FAL really wanted in this and other fields.

With respect Thai forces Sarit said envisages three steps—1, alert (which was now in effect); 2, recall of conscripts who had been released to save money (to do this would cost 4 million baht a day); and 3, moving troops out to the border and then into Laos (to do this would require money and equipment which Thai Government did not have). Support would also be required for RTA supply and logistics units not now receiving MAP support. He also again mentioned desire for support for full strength 21st RCT. I again emphasized essentiality staff work on these matters between Ministry of Defense and JUSMAG.

Sarit urged public show of force by US and suggested squadron or two of fighters or bombers be stationed at Taklee for "week or two." Public show force might deter Communists pressing any further into Laos and thus prevent necessity using force. "Would also be good for morale Thailand and Laos." I explained our desire not appear be saber-rattling particularly at this stage UN consideration matter but promised pass on his suggestion.

With respect numbered paragraphs 1 through 4 reference telegram,[5] I emphasized importance of Thailand taking lead in urging

[5] These paragraphs stressed the importance of SEATO placing itself in a position where it could act with minimum delay if required by the Laotian situation, including military action, and that these preparations should go forward simultaneously with U.N. consideration of the Laotian question.

other SEATO countries do maximum both militarily and politically prepare SEATO promptly take whatever action circumstances may require. He entirely concurred.

At end conversation I gave Sarit copy of report on status bridge construction between Udorn and Nong Kai[6] which USOM had prepared for me, suggesting he discuss with Thai Highway Department expediting completion eleven bridges still under construction. I promised follow up my end through USOM.

Johnson

[6] Not found.

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42. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, September 10, 1959—5 p.m.

657. Department telegram 553.[2] It is my understanding that one of essential steps to be taken if SEATO is to place itself in posture where it can be prepared act militarily in Laos with minimum delay is to complete action upon MPO Plan 5B/59. Paragraph 14 that paper appears well to set forth the points upon which prior agreement is essential. If it is desired that I address Council representatives, as I believe I should, for action on this paper, it will be important that I be instructed soonest with regard to US position on the points that it is considered appropriate be discussed in Council representatives and that US representative on Senior Planners Committee be instructed those points considered appropriate to discuss in that body.

Of course, one of most fundamental questions is that of identity of "appointed nation." In pursuance our desire see Thailand "in forefront under SEATO banner," believe it would be logical that Thailand assume this role. (Assume this would permit Thai commander of SEATO force to appoint an American deputy.)

It also seems to me Council representatives could seek to reach governmental agreement on draft directive to commander SEATO force as well as upon "SEATO political advisor" mentioned paragraph 19 B.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–1059. Top Secret; SEATO; Limit Distribution. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnotes 2, 3, and 5, *supra*.

Would welcome CINCPAC suggestions on how through Council representatives I could make maximum contribution towards reaching agreement on other points.[3]

Johnson

[3] In CINCPAC message 132229Z from Honolulu, September 13, quoted in JCS 9965642Z to CINCPAC, September 18, Admiral Felt requested orders to specify at the SEATO Military Advisers Meeting, September 22–24, which forces the United States was prepared to commit to a potential SEATO force in Laos, as well as to join in recommendations that the United States be "the appointed nation." In reply, the JCS approved most of Felt's contingency recommendations on forces but stated that if other SEATO nations unanimously wanted to draft the United States as the appointed nation, he was to reserve his position and ask for instructions. (Department of State, EA/Laos Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

43. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, September 15, 1959.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy in the Far East: NSC 5913, September 3, 1959[2]

The subject paper is scheduled for consideration at a Departmental briefing on Wednesday, September 16, in preparation for a National Security Council meeting on September 17.

The paper notes that, while the line of demarcation between Communist and non-Communist Asia has tended to stabilize over the past five years, the threat to Free World security is growing, due to an anticipated increase in the power of Communist China backed by the USSR. A factor of major significance is the likelihood that nuclear weapons will be based in Communist China before 1963, though almost certainly under Soviet custody.

The paper warns, in noting the diverse elements of vulnerability of the non-Communist Far East, that Communist China is likely to continue to exceed the rate of economic growth of Free Asian countries, with the possible exception of Japan. It reasons that a strong countervailing U.S. presence will be needed in the area for many years.

[1] Source: Department of State, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5913 Series. Secret. Drafted by Alfred leS. Jenkins and Marshall Green and concurred in by Graham Martin, Special Assistant to Dillon.

[2] Not printed. (*Ibid.*)

There are no significant changes in current U.S. policy proposed in the paper. However, NSC 5429/5, which it replaces, is out of date in a number of respects and is considered deficient and in need of replacement for other reasons as well. Of particular interest is the definition of U.S. objectives which, it is believed, summarizes in fairly realistic terms attainable goals of U.S. policy.

Recommendation:

That you support adoption of NSC 5913 and take the following actions with respect to remaining split positions:[3]

1. Page 8, paragraph 21, c. Suggest deletion as being unnecessary and as implying criticism of U.S. efforts to work on constructive terms with certain of those who wield power in East Asia today. It is true that Chiang, Rhee and Diem sometimes seem impetuous, authoritarian, demanding and even undemocratic but it must be remembered that they are the recognized leaders of countries with which we must cooperate on friendly terms. As leaders of divided countries it is understandable that they should take rigid positions in cold-war issues and that they should exercise strong authority. Having leaders of such authority and determination in these divided countries has not been without its advantages to the U.S.

2. Page 10, paragraph 30. Support majority opinion. (Argumentation familiar.)

3. Page 11, paragraph 33. Suggest deletion of JCS–Defense addition as being unnecessary and outdated. However, if overwhelming opinion supports, the paragraph could be accepted without injury to State's interests.

4. Page 12, paragraph 36, a. Support majority opinion, on basis that it defines the military roles of MAP-assisted countries (which the Treasury–Budget version fails to do) and on the grounds that the phrase "to the extent necessary" in the majority version defers adequately to the point of view reflected in the Treasury–Budget version.

5. Page 13, paragraph 37. Oppose deletion for self-evident reasons.

[3] The basis for these split positions is explained *infra*.

44. Memorandum of Discussion at the 419th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, September 17, 1959[1]

[Here follows a paragraph listing the participants in the meeting.]

1. U.S. Policy in the Far East (NSC 5429/5;[2] NIE 13–59;[3] NSC 5913; Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated September 15, 1959[4])

Mr. Gray presented NSC 5913 on the subject to the Council. (A copy of Mr. Gray's Briefing Note[5] is filed in the Minutes of the Meeting and another is attached to this Memorandum.) In the course of his briefing, Mr. Gray read Paragraph 1 and the first two sentences of Paragraph 2 of NSC 5913, saying that these sentences, in his view, stated very well the problem to which NSC 5913 was addressed:

"1. The primary problem confronting U.S. policy in the Far East is to cope with the growing threat to Free World security posed by increasing Communist power in Asia. There has been a basic trend over the past five years toward a stabilization of the line of demarcation between Communist and non-Communist Asia and toward an intensified awareness in the free Far Eastern countries of the nature of the Communist threat. But at the same time the power of Communist China backed by the USSR has increased rapidly and continued increases in this power must be expected. One factor of major significance in this connection is the likelihood that nuclear weapons will be based in Communist China some time before 1963, though almost certainly under Soviet custody.

"2. Our planning must assume that for the predictable future the Peiping regime will continue to exercise effective control over mainland China, that its military and economic strength and its resultant power position in Asia will continue to increase, and that despite likely frictions the Sino-Soviet alliance will hold firm. On the other hand, Communist China will undoubtedly encounter severe strains, dislocations, and setbacks in its efforts to deal with the problems confronting it."

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs. The drafting date is uncertain; the source text is dated July 1, 1960.

[2] Entitled "Current U.S. Policy Toward the Far East," dated December 22, 1954. For text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1952–1954, vol. XII, Part 2, pp. 1062–1072.

[3] [*Footnote (3 lines of text) not declassified*]

[4] This memorandum encloses a memorandum of the same date from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense, giving the views of the JCS on NSC 5913. (Department of State, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5913 Series; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Included in the microfiche supplement.

After summarizing the remainder of "General Considerations" of NSC 5913, Mr. Gray read Paragraph 9, which he characterized as a conclusion with respect to U.S. strategy forming the key to the balance of the paper:

"9. Since the Communist regime in China is unlikely to be replaced in the foreseeable future and since it is unlikely to be alienated from the Soviet Union, the principal means for dealing with the threat it poses is by helping to build up the political and economic strength and stability of free Asia, while maintaining an adequate Free World military posture. At the same time, we must be prepared to exploit any opportunities which may occur to retard the growth and extension of Chinese Communist power and influence and to place strains on Sino-Soviet relations."

Mr. Gray then turned to the differences of view reflected in NSC 5913. The first such "split" occurred in Paragraph 21, where Defense, JCS and Budget proposed to insert the injunction that "care should be taken to avoid over-committing and over-identifying the U.S. with one-man regimes."

Secretary McElroy said that in discussing this proposal with officials in the Department of Defense, he had discovered that it was difficult to make the words of the proposal (which Mr. Gray had just read) carry their true meaning. He felt it was important that the U.S. should not fail to maintain continuing relations with the possible successors to the strong men of "one-man regimes." If the language proposed by Defense, JCS, and Budget for insertion in Paragraph 21 conveyed such a meaning, then the language was a desirable addition to the paper. He understood that our diplomatic service already followed the practice, in one-man regime countries, of maintaining contact with possible successors of the one-man regime. He wanted to avoid over-identification with one-man regimes, but did not mean to suggest in any way that on that account we should adopt the unrealistic practice of neglecting to deal with such one-man regimes. He believed the problem was, in fact, covered by a provision in Basic National Security Policy (NSC 5906/1).[6] In any case, the problem was a general one rather than one limited to the Far East.

The President said he understood the proponents of the additional sentence in Paragraph 21 felt that a note of caution would do no harm. However, in his view, this sentence was like the admonition of a mother sending her daughter to a party: "Be very careful."

Mr. Dillon agreed with Secretary McElroy that the U.S. should not be over-committed to one-man regimes; but he felt the U.S. had not, as the language suggested, been over-committing itself to such re-

[6] Dated August 5, 1959. (Department of State, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5906 Series)

gimes. In the case of Chiang, Rhee, and others, delicate matters were involved, matters with which the Department of State should be able to deal on a flexible basis.

Mr. Stans[7] said he would not press for adoption of the Defense, JCS, Budget proposal, which was merely a caution. In discussions of Latin American policy, the question of greater U.S. restraint in dealing with dictators had been raised. The President said the Defense, JCS, Budget sentence might be adopted if it led off with the words, "as always before."

The Vice President referred to Paragraph 21–b which mentioned "democratic growth" and "governments having popular support." He hoped it was not being assumed that one-man regimes in underdeveloped countries did not have popular support, or were the worst regimes for these countries.

Reverting to Mr. Dillon's reference to Rhee, the President said that man, though mortal, sometimes clings to power longer than he should. Referring specifically to Paragraph 21 of NSC 5913, the President did not think it was important whether the sentence proposed by Defense, JCS and Budget was included or omitted from the paper.

Secretary McElroy agreed that the subject was not worth more discussion and offered to withdraw his support from the proposed new sentence if the State Department was still opposed to it. Mr. McCone[8] pointed out that the flexibility desired by the State Department was already provided for in Paragraph 21–b. The President believed one-man regimes would not last long without popular support. He noted that Khrushchev emphasized his popular support.

Mr. Gray then read Paragraph 36 of Basic National Security Policy (NSC 5906/1) which provided that while maintaining correct relations with recognized governments, the U.S. should also maintain contact with selected elements of the non-Communist opposition to such governments. The President said the new sentence proposed by Defense, JCS and Budget for insertion in Paragraph 21 of NSC 5913 should be omitted, on the basis that if the proponents of the sentence felt in the future that we were becoming over-committed in a particular instance, they could bring the matter to the attention of the Council.

Mr. Gray continued his briefing. After explaining Paragraph 24 covering U.S. action to deal with aggression or subversion, Mr. Gray reported that the Planning Board had considered a proposal that the U.S. should recognize or enter into appropriate relations with Outer Mongolia (Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Briefing Note).

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[7] Maurice H. Stans, Director of the Bureau of the Budget.

[8] John A. McCone, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.

Mr. Dillon said the question was whether intelligence information gained by recognition of Outer Mongolia would be of more value to the U.S. than the political loss which would result from such a step. Our recognition of Outer Mongolia would be regarded throughout the Far East as a weakening of our position with respect to the recognition of Communist China. In addition, there was no indication that Outer Mongolia desired recognition, so that we might find ourselves in the embarrassing position of having our recognition refused unless we accepted a whole series of unacceptable conditions. Such a development would be a distinct political disadvantage.

The President was under the impression that we did not recognize nations which did not ask for recognition. He recalled that President Truman had been criticized for recognizing Israel in the absence of a request.

Mr. Allen Dulles agreed that recognition of Outer Mongolia might be premature at present; but if some means could be devised to enable the U.S. to send personnel into the country, a great deal of desirable information about conditions in Outer Mongolia might be developed. Technically, Outer Mongolia was a Soviet country, but in practice it enjoyed a measure of independence vis-à-vis the USSR and Communist China. Collectivization had not progressed far in this nomadic land. Mr. Salisbury (*New York Times*) believed that Outer Mongolia, now dominated by the USSR, would in time be dominated by Communist China. Mr. Dulles inquired about travel restrictions relating to Outer Mongolia.

Mr. Dillon said travel restrictions relating to Outer Mongolia were the same as for the USSR, except for the factor of recognition.

Mr. Dulles believed that if a reasonable amount of travel and work in Outer Mongolia on a commercial basis could be permitted, the country would be a valuable lookout post [and?] as a country which might become a point of strain between the USSR and Communist China.

Mr. Dillon said there was no objection to travel by U.S. citizens in Outer Mongolia.

Mr. Gray said he was not requesting a decision on the matter of Outer Mongolia at this time. Perhaps State and CIA would keep the matter under study.

Mr. Gray then referred to the split on passport policy in Paragraph 30, where the majority wished to continue our present restrictive policy on travel by Americans to Asian Communist areas, while Defense and the JCS would like us to permit travel except where U.S. interests would be damaged thereby.

Secretary McElroy said the intent of the Defense proposal was simple. We know little about Communist China, North Vietnam, and North Korea; in order to find out more it might be desirable to increase

travel, but if such travel was considered politically undesirable, then he would not continue to advocate it. The President wondered whether such travel would be worthwhile if some Americans were arrested and sentenced to 25 years as spies. Mr. Dillon said that even under present U.S. policy, news correspondents can travel in Communist Asia, though they find it difficult to get in. A change in our passport policy would be interpreted in the Far East as a weakening of our attitude toward Communist Asia.

Mr. Dulles supported the Defense proposal. He would like to obtain from Communist Asia more information than was obtainable at present. In fact, our present information was quite inadequate. He hoped existing regulations respecting travel would be adjusted with the intelligence potential of travel in mind. It was possible that Communist countries would admit more travelers in the future.

Secretary McElroy asked whether Communist countries of Asia had attempted to have their nationals admitted to the U.S. Mr. Dillon said they were apparently willing to permit a reciprocal, case-by-case exchange.

Mr. Dulles noted that the majority version of Paragraph 30 referred to "present restrictive policies" on travel of Americans to Communist Asia. He suggested the word "restrictive" be deleted in order to allow leeway in the interpretation of policy.

The President believed the majority version of Paragraph 30 should be adopted.

Mr. Gray then reported that Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff wished to insert in NSC 5913 a new Paragraph 33 providing that the U.S. should not allow European countries to influence unduly actions considered essential to attaining or preserving U.S. objectives in the Far East.

Mr. Dillon asked whether this point had been covered in Basic National Security Policy (NSC 5906/1). Mr. Gray said the matter had been debated in connection with Basic Policy, and the decision had been to omit any provision on the question from Basic Policy.

Secretary McElroy was unable to understand why there should be objection to including in the paper a statement of what certainly should be our policy. Mr. Dillon said the only objection was that the statement was gratuitous. Secretary McElroy believed the paper contained a great deal of gratuitous language. Mr. Dillon felt it was essential for the U.S. to take account of the interests of the European countries in the Far East; for example, we could not ignore Dutch interests in our dealings with Indonesia. Secretary McElroy said the proposed paragraph was not vital in any event. The President remarked that a great many admonitions were being included in the paper; but added that he had no objection to the new Paragraph 33 proposed by Defense.

Mr. Gray explained the split in Paragraph 36–a, which read as follows:

"Majority"	*"Treasury–Budget"*
"36.a. Through military and support assistance and other measures, support to the extent necessary the maintenance by free Asian states of military forces which (1) are capable of maintaining internal security and of identifying and delaying Communist aggression and which (2) together with U.S. and other allied military power are capable of coping with, and thereby deterring, Communist aggression."	"36.a. Continue to provide military and support assistance to free Asian nations whose increased ability to defend themselves and to make their appropriate contribution to collective military power is important to the security of the United States."

Secretary McElroy did not believe the two versions of Paragraph 36–a represented a major difference of opinion. While he favored the majority proposal because it was more specific, he believed the Department of Defense could operate satisfactorily under either version of the paragraph.

Mr. Dillon believed it was important to state the role of the indigenous forces, as the majority proposal did. However, the majority proposal was totally "open-ended" and failed to take a scarcity of resources into account. He suggested that the majority language, if adopted, should be amended to provide that the U.S. would support free Asian forces "to the extent practicable and necessary."

The President felt that one additional thought was implied by this paragraph, i.e., that assistance would be furnished only to those countries desiring and seeking assistance. Perhaps this thought was covered in Basic National Security Policy. Mr. Gray believed it would do no harm to qualify the Far East policy along these lines.

Mr. Stans observed that the majority language in Paragraph 36–a said a great deal more than anyone intended to say; in fact, it authorized the operators to do anything they desired in any country, as was indicated by the phrases "to the extent necessary," "free Asian states" (implying any or all free Asian states), "other measures," etc. The Treasury–Budget proposal was taken from Basic National Security Policy. Mr. Stans was unable to understand why the language from Basic Policy was not acceptable, especially in view of the budgetary situation in Congress, which would raise difficulties about broadening our military assistance obligations. In Mr. Stans' view, the Treasury–Budget proposal was more specific than the majority proposal,

because it included criteria for the provision of military assistance. Military assistance paragraphs in recent policy papers (e.g., South Asia) had included such criteria.

The President remarked that he had assumed the "other measures" mentioned in the majority proposal referred to covert measures. He then said it was his conviction that we should increase our expenditures on military assistance to the Far East, even if it became necessary to reduce other programs in order to do so. He believed military assistance was our most important program in this part of the world. Of course he did not want to adopt inexact language which would leave important decisions to junior staff officers; but he had thought the majority language a good description of what we were trying to achieve.

Mr. Dillon believed the changes which he had earlier suggested in the majority proposal would meet the Budget criticisms of the proposal.

The President said Mr. Stans had based his views in part on the prospect of difficulty in Congress. He agreed there would be difficulty in securing Congressional agreement to our military assistance program.

Mr. Stans felt that, if the majority language were about to be adopted, it should at least be qualified by the phrase "important to the security of the U.S." Mr. Gray said the word "support" might be qualified by "to the extent practicable and necessary in the interest of the U.S." The President approved the majority version of Paragraph 36–a with this amendment.

Mr. Gray then turned to Paragraph 37, which appeared in NSC 5913 as follows:

"37. Do not agree to GRC, ROK or GVN offensive actions against Communist territory, except under circumstances approved by the President. Agree to actions by these countries against Communist China, North Korea, and North Vietnam which are prompt and clear retaliation against a Communist attack, provided such retaliation is against targets of military significance which meet U.S. criteria as to feasibility and chance of success [and which are selected with due consideration for the undesirability of provoking further Communist reaction against free Asian countries.]*

"*JCS proposes deletion."[9]

However, since NSC 5913 was issued, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had submitted the following as a proposed substitute for Paragraph 37:

"d. Paragraph 37, page 13. Delete. In place thereof substitute the following wording, placing it in a Limited Distribution Annex:

[9] Brackets in the source text.

"Under circumstances approved by the President, agree to actions by the GRC, ROK, and GVN which are in clear retaliation against Communist attack; and condone and support certain military activities by these governments against Communist held territory which meet U.S. criteria as to feasibility and chance of success."

"*Reason:* The paragraph proposed in the draft policy is passive in tone, and inhibits the Free World from gaining the initiative in the Far East. Neither purely defensive moves made to meet actions initiated by the Communists, nor concessions made in an effort to appease them will relieve the tensions or resolve the issues in the area. It is possible that condoning small-scale military activities would regain for the Free World a certain degree of initiative in the Far East. The sensitivity of the substitute proposal makes its desirable to Limit Distribution."

Mr. Gray explained in some detail the issues raised by the differences of view on Paragraph 37 (See Paragraphs 14–18 of the Briefing Note) and called on General Twining.

General Twining said Mr. Gray's briefing seemed to have covered the subject. The Joint Chiefs of Staff felt that Paragraph 37 as it appeared in NSC 5913 was purely defensive in character, and that a purely defensive attitude could only result in loss of the initiative. Careful consideration should be given to measures designed to regain the initiative and throw the enemy off balance. Mr.Gray pointed out that the actions suggested in the JCS proposal would be undertaken by indigenous military forces. General Twining added that such actions would be undertaken only on a case-by-case basis after Presidential approval in advance.

The President said that if a whole series of examples of the effective use of small military forces against a large power could be cited, he might be inclined to agree with the JCS. But if we suggested under present circumstances that the small forces in the Far East take action against Communist China, we were asking them to get their faces slapped. In effect the JCS proposal told military staffs to be on the lookout for ways to "needle" the enemy. In his view, we did not gain the initiative by putting a chip on our shoulder. He would, however, take a different view of this problem if the indigenous allied forces in the Far East were effective, well-equipped armies.

General Twining said the Chinese Nationalist forces were effective. The President agreed, and added that a specific commitment as to what these forces could do already existed. The President also observed that some of the measures which could be taken under the JCS proposal would be like putting a lightweight in the ring with Jeffries.

Mr. Dillon recalled the late Secretary Dulles' efforts to induce the Chinese Nationalists to agree that the primary means they would employ for taking over the mainland again would be peaceful in

nature. Free World support for our position with respect to the Offshore Islands was necessary. To condone the actions proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff would be to risk loss of Free World support for our China policy.

Governor Hoegh said he understood that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were taking the position that they did not wish to be restricted but wished to be free to seize an opportunity if one arose, taking action only with the approval of the President, of course. General Twining agreed, saying the Planning Board paragraph was too negative.

Secretary McElroy called attention to the extreme restriction in the last clause of Paragraph 37. This extreme restriction, i.e., consideration of the "undesirability of provoking further Communist reaction", was even applied to cases of prompt and clear retaliation against a Communist attack. Mr. Gray believed Secretary McElroy had raised a different issue. The President believed the last clause of Paragraph 37 was unnecessary.

Mr. Dillon said that at the time of the Chinese Communist bombardment of the Offshore Islands, Chiang had proposed retaliation by air bombing of the Chinese Communist batteries. We opposed this suggestion because we estimated that such action would provoke a major clash. The effects of a retaliatory action on the Free World must be borne in mind; hence a judgment as to retaliation cannot be based solely on military considerations but must also take political factors into account.

[*1 paragraph (3½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

The President thought Paragraph 37 might well consist of the first sentence only. Mr. Gray believed the Defense–JCS point of view would be met by eliminating the bracketed language from Paragraph 37. Mr. Dillon opposed Mr. Gray's suggestion. Elimination of the bracketed language would make the question one to be decided on purely military considerations. Secretary McElroy believed each case was different and should be considered separately.

The Vice President suggested that in the last clause of Paragraph 37 the word "undesirability" should be changed to "risks" to avoid negative implication. The President thought the reference to provoking "further" Communist reaction might be changed to provoking "heavy" or "overwhelming" Communist reaction. The Vice President suggested "substantial" Communist reaction. The President then said he was inclined toward confining Paragraph 37 to the first sentence. Secretary McElroy agreed that this suggestion would provide the necessary flexibility in our policy. The President said the first sentence of this paragraph permitted staff planning but made it clear that action would not be taken without Presidential approval.

Mr. Gray pointed out that the first sentence of Paragraph 37 referred to "offensive" action. The President said retaliatory action could be offensive in nature. Mr. Gray noted that the language of the paragraph did not specifically say that retaliatory action would be approved by the President; in other words the language of the first sentence did not carry into the second sentence. The President doubted the wisdom of saying to Chiang, in effect, "we agree to any action you wish to take which is clearly retaliatory."

Mr. Dillon believed the second sentence of Paragraph 37 should be qualified by "under circumstances approved by the President." Mr. Gray said agreement appeared to have been reached; the language could be worked out later.

Continuing his briefing, Mr. Gray then noted that NSC 5913 did not include language which clearly stated U.S. policy in the event of a major uprising in Communist China. The President said that a major uprising had once occurred in Hungary and everyone had been afraid to take action. In the event of an uprising in Communist China, we have to decide what would be gained by action and what the people of China wanted. The Chinese people were not a pawn in a struggle between Mao and Chiang. If they wanted freedom and called for help, that might be one thing; but a decision by the U.S. to intervene in the absence of an appeal for help would be quite another thing. This was the type of situation the governing factors of which could not be calculated in advance. General Twining wondered whether Paragraph 37 could not be used in such a situation. Mr. Gray said he had merely wanted the Council to be aware of this gap in NSC 5913. He believed the problem of a major uprising might be considered covered by Paragraph 37, however.

Mr. Gray then completed his briefing. There was no further discussion.

The National Security Council:[10]

a. Discussed the draft statement of policy on the subject contained in NSC 5913; in the light of the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thereon, transmitted by the reference memorandum of September 15, 1959.

b. Adopted the statement of policy in NSC 5913, subject to the following amendments:

[10] Paragraphs a–c and the Note that follows constitute NSC Action No. 2128. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

(1) *Page 8, paragraph 21–c:* Delete this subparagraph and the footnote thereto, with the understanding that the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff may bring the matter up whenever they believe that the U.S. is over-committing or over-identifying itself with any one-man regime.

(2) *Pages 10 and 11, paragraph 30:* Include the Majority version on the left and delete the Defense version on the right.

(3) *Page 11, paragraph 33:* Include this paragraph, deleting the brackets and the footnote thereto.

(4) *Pages 12 and 13, paragraph 36–a:* In place of the two versions shown, substitute the following:

"Through military and support assistance and other measures, support to the extent practicable and necessary in the interests of U.S. security the maintenance by free Asian states, requesting such support, of military forces which (1) are capable of maintaining internal security and of identifying and delaying Communist aggression and which (2) together with U.S. and other allied military power are capable of coping with, and thereby deterring, Communist aggression."

(5) *Page 13, Paragraph 37:* Substitute the following:

"a. Except under circumstances approved by the President, do not agree to GRC, ROK, or GVN offensive actions against Communist territory.

"b. Under circumstances approved by the President, agree to actions by the GRC, ROK or GVN against Communist China, North Korea, and North Vietnam which are prompt and clear retaliation against a Communist attack, provided such retaliation is against targets of military significance which meet U.S. criteria as to feasibility and chance of success and which are selected with due consideration for the risk of provoking heavy Communist reaction against free Asian countries."

c. Noted that the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency would continue to study the possibility of obtaining additional information regarding Outer Mongolia through such means as increasing travel and contacts in that area.

Note: NSC 5913, as amended by the action in b above, subsequently approved by the President; circulated as NSC 5913/1 for implementation by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and referred to the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency designated by the President.[13]

Paragraph 11 of NSC 5723 subsequently revised to correspond with the wording of paragraph 37 in b–(5) above and circulated to all holders of NSC 5723.

The action in c above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to the Secretary of State and the Director of Central Intelligence for appropriate implementation.

[13] NSC 5913/1 is printed as Document 48.

[Here follow items 2 and 3. For the discussion of Laos under item 2, see Document 271.]

Marion W. Boggs

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45. Memorandum of a Conversation, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, September 18, 1959, 10:30 a.m.[1]

SecDel/MC/14

PARTICIPANTS

US
The Secretary
Mr. Merchant
Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Sisco

UK
Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd
Sir Pierson Dixon
Harold Beeley
Samuel Hood
Denis Laskey

France
S.E. Maurice Couve de Murville
Ambassador Herve Alphand
Amb. Armand Berard

SUBJECT

SEATO Planning

The Secretary said to Lloyd and Couve that we believe it is highly desirable for the SEATO military advisors to develop contingency plans in the event Laos itself is unable to meet further incursions or in the event of Vietminh and/or Chinese Communist attacks. The Secretary stressed that in the absence of such contingency plans, we might be caught in an embarrassing situation. The Secretary said he believed this was a good exercise to go through.

Lloyd expressed fear that the contingency planning would become known if SEATO does it. However, he felt that if the contingency planning was done on a tripartite basis the risk of it becoming known would be lessened considerably. He did not feel it would be a

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted on September 21 by Joseph J. Sisco, Deputy Director of the Office of United Nations Political and Security Affairs. Secretary Herter and Foreign Ministers Lloyd and Couve de Murville were in New York to attend the 14th Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

good idea to have it known that SEATO was doing this kind of planning, particularly while we are emphasizing at this point the role of the Security Council subcommittee.

Couve expressed the view that the real difficulty was that it was hard to know what the factual situation is in Laos, whether it was largely an internal matter or whether external interference was involved. The Secretary said contingency planning was more useful than making no plans at all. Mr. Parsons added that, although facts are hard to get, there was agreement that the situation in Laos was instigated and aided by outside help.

Lloyd stressed the importance of keeping this matter in military channels and to avoid any SEATO Council meeting which would have to take political action by ratifying what the military advisors had agreed to. The Secretary said we did not contemplate this as the purpose of the September 28 Washington meeting of SEATO. We hoped the SEATO meeting would consist of a brief, general discussion. Lloyd said he could not give the authority to agree to any contingency plan in the absence of knowing the actual circumstances and that such a decision would have to be taken by the government in the light of the then prevailing situation. The Secretary said like any contingency plan, it had to take into account just what we had available and what could be done.

It was agreed by the three that the contingency planning would continue in military channels.

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46. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

Washington, September 21, 1959—10:30 p.m.

2350. British Embassy (de la Mare) today informed us (Green) U.K. considers present MPO Plan 5B/59[2] "unrealistic" on two principal grounds: 1) definition of Communist insurgency in paragraph 1 is faulty in that SEATO intervention under circumstances described would not have necessary degree of world support, and 2) present plan does not spell out realistic force contributions on part of U.S. and

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2159. Top Secret; Priority; Seato; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Howard D. Jones and Marshall Green in FE and approved by Robert Murphy. Also sent niact to Bangkok and Wellington and repeated to Canberra, Karachi, Manila, Paris, Vientiane, CINCPAC for POLAD, and USUN.

[2] See footnote 4, Document 37.

other members. Unless U.S. perceived objection U.K. Military Adviser instructed to recommend that definition of Communist insurgency be referred back to Council Representatives. U.K. Council Representative would then propose at special September 22 meeting that present version "Armed action against established Government of country by organized bands or groups, responsive in varying degrees to covert foreign control, direction or support, under conditions which do not permit such action to be identified as external aggression" be changed to read "Armed attack against established government of country by organized bands or groups subject to such a degree of foreign direction, support or control as to amount to aggression."

British [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*] fear leak and believe this would be particularly embarrassing if it known that SEATO has plan for intervention which not based on countering external aggression.

We registered strong concern about this last minute proposal for redefinition of Communist insurgency arguing along following lines: 1) proposal may have effect of delaying planning which we believe should be advanced into readiness stage at once, 2) it may be interpreted by Asian members as indication that one or more Western members not prepared live up to Treaty commitments when faced with actual situation that might require action, and 3) redefinition proposal might leak, causing anxiety to RLG and encouraging Communists to greater activity in psychological warfare and other areas short of provable aggression.

Our foregoing objections based on our understanding British position based more on legal and public relations considerations than on question of substance. If, however, effect of their proposal would be to require hard proof of outside support of an insurrection when only strong circumstantial evidence available we feel this would be conceding too great an advantage to Communists. Laos has great strategic importance and its loss through internal subversion supported only covertly from without would be extremely serious blow to free world. Moreover, whereas British seem only concerned about effect of leaks on world opinion we emphasized possibility that leaks may serve to invite Communists to seek loopholes in our defenses and pursue courses they would not undertake in face of determined SEATO stand.

We questioned why British had raised this issue on very eve of key SEATO meetings. De la Mare claimed British have indicated in past they had reservations about definition but acknowledged they never made big issue of it. He was apologetic and embarrassed re timing of this British move. We suggested that if British could not see way clear to accept MPO 5B/59 definition of insurgency, then U.K. might merely record reservations on definition and allow planning to

progress. We argued that contingency plan could not be implemented automatically but only after political decision by member governments.

Re commitment of forces we told British we feel it is time to advance planning in this and other areas cited paragraph 14 of plan[3] and our Military Adviser has been appropriately instructed.

In conclusion we reemphasized that whatever course of action British decided to take in premises, we believe it should be responsive to imperative need to get forward immediately with a practical SEATO plan of action for meeting contingencies in Laos.

For Bangkok: Ambassador Johnson should take this question up immediately with British colleague with view to preventing any disruptions or delays in SEATO emergency planning.

For London: Same approach to U.K. Foreign Office recommended.

For Wellington: Consider foregoing reply to your 100 and 105 which just received.[4]

Dillon

[3] See footnote 5, Document 38.

[4] In telegram 100 from Wellington, September 21, Ambassador Russell reported that Prime Minister Nash was disturbed about the definition of Communist insurgency in MPO 5B/59. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2159; included in the microfiche supplement) In telegram 106, September 21, Russell described his discussions with the U.K. High Commissioner in Wellington regarding the British position on SEATO planning. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2159)

47. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State[1]

London, September 23, 1959—6 p.m.

1586. Reference: Department telegram 2350[2] addressees. Embassy officer saw Assistant Under Secretary Superintending Far Eastern Departments (MacDermot) at first opportunity morning September 23 and made representations as instructed reference telegram.

MacDermot said Foreign Office had raised questions about MPO Plan 5B/59 with unfortunately belated timing because UK Council representative Bangkok had asked for urgent instructions on those

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2359. Top Secret; Priority; SEATO; Limited Distribution. Repeated to Bangkok, Canberra, Karachi, Vientiane, Wellington, CINCPAC for POLAD, and USUN.

[2] *Supra.*

points. However, when de la Mare had communicated Department's objections to Foreign Office by telephone right after discussion in Department, Foreign Office had sent UK representative Bangkok instructions to agree that planning should proceed provided realistic force commitments specified by US and others.[3] UK representative should record, however, UK reservations relating to special UK position on Laos because of Geneva agreements "which UK considers still binding." (Bangkok telegram 779 to Department[4] received after Embassy officer's call at Foreign Office corroborates foregoing.) MacDermot said UK can not bind itself to enter Laos in circumstances which would compromise its obligation under Geneva agreements, but Foreign Office confident that SEATO would not in practice do anything which would present such difficulty. What Foreign Office is more concerned about is security of discussions of military planning by Council representatives. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] This need not inhibit advanced planning discussions by military advisers or between those members of SEATO "like ourselves who would do most of work anyway," MacDermot said.

Foreign Office had received report of military advisers meeting September 22. MacDermot indicated Foreign Office pleased with fact Admiral Felt had laid forth specifics of forces US would commit under contingency plan. Foreign Office also pleased to note that Admiral Felt had acknowledged his understanding and acceptance of UK reservations based on its unique position relative to Laos under Geneva agreements.

MacDermot asserted there was no doubt that SEATO forces would go into Laos if situation demanded [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*].

During discussion MacDermot also mentioned that as result Lloyd–Herter agreeing it desirable there be some UN presence in Laos following UN sub-committee, Foreign Office is trying to think up some device which has good chance of either winning Security Council approval or making Soviets look bad if they object. He said none had yet been found, but he thought it should be possible to devise one. He assumed Department also trying to find answer to what comes after sub-committee.

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[3] This decision was reported to Eisenhower: "UK to join limited SEATO planning. While retaining reservations on some of the political assumptions, the UK has agreed to go forward with SEATO planning regarding Laos. The planning remains completely subject to political decision and does not constitute a political commitment." ("Synopsis of Intelligence Items Reported to the President" by Goodpaster, September 24; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, DDE Diaries)

[4] Dated September 22. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2259)

Comment: We feel that Foreign Office concern that UK may be compromised by untimely leak or otherwise about plan to commit forces to SEATO intervention Laos [*1 line of source text not declassified*] is expression of essentially undimmed British desire to get back to some kind of modus vivendi in Laos such as Geneva agreements provided for and which in Foreign Office view is only really practical protection for Laos. We think de la Mare's approach on British reservations to committing its forces under plan may in fact have been "floating upwards" from working level of ideas expressed to Embassy officer September 15 (Embassy telegram 1428 to Department, sent Vientiane 42, Bangkok 19, CINCPAC 32, USUN 23).[5]

Another Foreign Office concern which we have noted which we think may help explain British reservations on MPO Plan 5B/59 has now apparently been dispelled by Admiral Felt's specifying US forces for plan. We understand British concern was not only that there might be leak about plan to use Commonwealth brigade Malaya, but that there might be resulting problem with Malaya under UK–Malaya defense agreement.

Although we have no specific evidence, we feel sure that HMG also anxious to avoid if possible during current election campaign any public disclosures or discussion of possible use of UK forces under SEATO in Laos.

Perhaps even deeper motive for Foreign Office and, indeed, HMG concern over some disclosure commitment UK forces to SEATO plan for Laos is pervading thought it might well trigger even greater Communist effort in Laos.

Whitney

[5] Not printed.

48. National Security Council Report[1]

NSC 5913/1 *Washington, September 25, 1959.*

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON U.S. POLICY IN THE FAR EAST

REFERENCES

A. NSC 5429/5
B. NIE 13-59
C. NSC 5913
D. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated September 15, 1959
E. NSC Action No. 2128

The National Security Council, Mr. Julian B. Baird, for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Director, Bureau of the Budget, at the 419th Council meeting on September 17, 1959, adopted the draft statement of policy on the subject contained in NSC 5913, subject to the amendments set forth in NSC Action No. 2128–b.

The President has this date approved the statement of policy in NSC 5913, as amended and adopted by the Council and enclosed herewith as NSC 5913/1; directs its implementation by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and designates the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency.

A "Summary Tabulation of Expenditures in the Far East" is also enclosed for the information of the Council.

The enclosed statement of policy, as adopted and approved, supersedes NSC 5429/5.

James S. Lay, Jr.[2]

[1] Source: Department of State, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351, NSC 5913 Series. Secret. An attached summary tabulation of expenditures, not printed here, is included in the microfiche supplement.

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

Enclosure

STATEMENT OF U.S. POLICY IN THE FAR EAST[3]

General Considerations

1. The primary problem confronting U.S. policy in the Far East is to cope with the growing threat to Free World security posed by increasing Communist power in Asia. There has been a basic trend over the past five years toward a stabilization of the line of demarcation between Communist and non-Communist Asia and toward an intensified awareness in the free Far Eastern countries of the nature of the Communist threat. But at the same time the power of Communist China backed by the USSR has increased rapidly and continued increases in this power must be expected. One factor of major significance in this connection is the likelihood that nuclear weapons will be based in Communist China some time before 1963, though almost certainly under Soviet custody.

2. Our planning must assume that for the predictable future the Peiping regime will continue to exercise effective control over mainland China, that its military and economic strength and its resultant power position in Asia will continue to increase, and that despite likely frictions the Sino-Soviet alliance will hold firm. On the other hand, Communist China will undoubtedly encounter severe strains, dislocations, and setbacks in its efforts to deal with the problems confronting it. Its underfed and overworked population has been subjected to the highest degree of regimentation seen in modern times, with resultant extensive bitterness toward the regime. Moreover, the ruthless character and aggressiveness which the Chinese Communist regime has displayed in domestic programs, in the Tibetan situation, and in foreign policy have increased apprehension in Asia of Communist China's strength and intentions, and much of the admiration and sympathy which it enjoyed has been lost. However, these problems are unlikely to prevent it from posing a growing threat to Free World security over the next five years.

3. A major contributory source of the danger we face in the Far East derives from the rate of Chinese Communist economic growth. This growth makes a real contribution to Bloc economic and military power. The likelihood that Communist China will continue to outstrip the rate of growth of free Asian countries, with the possible exception

[3] Includes Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sarawak, North Borneo, New Guinea, Brunei, Timor, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaya, Thailand, Burma, Communist China, North Korea, North Viet Nam. It also takes cognizance of the importance of India to the Far East. [Footnote in the source text.]

of Japan, is also having considerable impact on the attitudes of non-Communist Asian countries, although it may be offset in some measure by growing recognition of the human costs involved in the Chinese Communist experiment and of China's continuing failure to satisfy even the basic requirements of her population. These factors underline the importance of steady economic growth and political and social stability in non-Communist Asia, if it is not to succumb to Communist pressures or lures. However, economic growth cannot be emphasized to the detriment of adequate security measures, for, without security and the stability and confidence deriving from security, real economic progress will be unattainable.

4. The weakness and instability of various non-Communist Far East countries—including in some instances a lack of popular identification with the regime in power—engendered by the area's incomplete political, social and economic revolutions, are major handicaps in meeting the Communist threat. Despite some progress toward remedying this weakness and instability, these handicaps are unlikely to be overcome within the next few years. Moreover, deep-seated antagonisms and differing assessments as to how to meet the threat continue to divide the countries of the area and severely hamper efforts to combine their collective resources for their own defense and welfare. These factors will continue to provide opportunities for Communist exploitation, both internally and externally.

5. This vulnerability of the non-Communist Far East, particularly the imbalance between Communist and indigenous non-Communist power in the area, causes the area to be heavily dependent on the United States and has made a countervailing U.S. presence there indispensable. This U.S. presence, together with local attitudes and efforts, has improved Free World capabilities to cope with the Communist threat and has sufficed to stabilize the line of demarcation between Communist and non-Communist Asia over the last five years.

6. With Asian Communist strength continuing to grow, it is clear that the maintenance of this line of demarcation will require a strong countervailing U.S. presence in the area for many years, including the provision of sufficient U.S. aid and support—as well as a firm determination on the part of the Free Far East states to maintain their independence.

7. Asian nationalism, a dominant force which is directed toward the preservation of national independence and against those who are seen as trying to subvert or abridge independence, is tending increasingly to be a source of strength rather than weakness for the Free World position in the Far East. This nationalism has in the past had an anti-colonial and anti-Western focus. To a considerable extent this focus continues and there is still considerable lack of popular understanding in the area regarding Communism. However, there is in-

creasing recognition, particularly among responsible leaders, of the nature of the Communist menace to national independence and ways of life, and there is increasing determination and capacity to resist Communist encroachments. Thus, as anti-colonial and anti-Western attitudes gradually fade, Communist China is tending to emerge in the minds of Asians as the greatest threat to free Asian nationalist aspirations, and concomitantly the image of the United States is improving. However, increased awareness of the Communist threat may not in itself produce greater capacity to resist. Herein lies the core of the problem for the United States.

8. In the effort to build up greater non-Communist strength in Asia, particular consideration must be given to the key roles which can be played by Japan and India as two free Asian countries with major power potentials. Neither of these countries would have the strength to serve alone as a counterweight to Communist China, but together, in coordination with other Free World countries, they could help balance effectively Peiping's growing power. Moreover, the national interests of these two countries will probably tend increasingly to come into conflict with the expansionist tendencies of Peiping. Their resources, properly employed, could greatly complement U.S. power in stabilizing the power balance in the Far East. This potential underlines the importance of the achievement by Japan and India of stronger power positions and of persuading them to exert their influence, in ways compatible with U.S. interests, toward enabling the weaker countries around the periphery of Communist Asia to counter Communist expansionist and subversive pressures. Japan is already making significant contributions to the economic development of South and Southeast Asia.

9. Since the Communist regime in China is unlikely to be replaced in the foreseeable future and since it is unlikely to be alienated from the Soviet Union, the principal means for dealing with the threat it poses is by helping to build up the political and economic strength and stability of free Asia, while maintaining an adequate over-all Free World military posture. At the same time, we must be prepared to exploit any opportunities which may occur to retard the growth and extension of Chinese Communist power and influence and to place strains on Sino-Soviet relations.

Objectives

10. Preservation of the territorial and political integrity of the Free World countries and other Free World areas against further Communist expansion or subversion.

11. a. Strong, stable, free Far East nations, which are determined to maintain their independence.

b. Evolutionary development of democratic governments supported by stable political, economic and social institutions.

12. Eventual reunification under free governments of the divided countries of the area.

13. Development of conditions which in time are likely to be conducive to bringing about acceptable changes in the character, policies and actions of Asian Communist regimes and to permitting settlement of issues on terms compatible with U.S. security interests.

14. a. Retardation of the growth of and, to the extent feasible, reduction of the power of, Asian Communist regimes, especially Communist China.

b. Reduction of the prestige of Asian Communist regimes, especially Communist China.

15. The weakening of the ties that link the Sino-Soviet bloc.

16. Development of political, economic and social forces in the Far East which will advance Free World unity, Free World and regional cooperation, and common purposes in the area.

17. Identification of the United States with the maintenance of national independence, the promotion of human values, and improvement of conditions of life as goals of free Asian nations and peoples, and recognition by Free World nations of the Far East that these goals, taken together, can only be realized within the Free World.

Policy Guidance

General

18. Give firm support to the free governments of the area in their efforts to maintain their territorial and political integrity against aggression or subversion by the Communists.

19. Insure a strong U.S. position in the area in terms of both power and prestige.

20. In accordance with measures set forth below, strengthen the economic, political and military position of free Far East nations.

Political

21. a. Promote the tenure and standing of friendly governments which are striving earnestly for economic, political and social advancement.

b. While seeking as feasible to achieve our long-range aim of encouraging democratic growth, especially respect for basic human rights, encourage strong, stable governments which have popular support and are best suited to the current requirements of various countries, taking into account their traditions, circumstances and capabilities.

22. Show respect and understanding for the foreign policy position of any free Far Eastern country, whether allied or neutral, provided that country is striving to defend and strengthen its independence.

23. Seek to allay animosities among various free Far Eastern countries, urging moderation and mutual respect between parties to disputes and taking an active role where that would serve our general interests.

24. Employ all feasible means to prevent free Far Eastern countries and territories from falling under Communist control by overt armed attack, subversion, economic domination, or other means, including as necessary and appropriate:

a. Concerting action with other nations;

b. Carrying out U.S. obligations under applicable security treaties;

d. The use of U.S. armed forces in accordance with constitutional processes.

25. Continue to seek and utilize appropriate means to bring about better understanding by the Free World nations of the Far East as to the importance of nuclear weapons in effectively deterring war and as to the need for their prompt and selective use when required.

26. Stress to host governments the importance to them of the presence of U.S. forces on their territories. When host countries seek adjustments in arrangements governing the stationing of our forces, respond promptly, and to the extent feasible negotiate appropriate adjustments.

27. Continue to refuse recognition of the Chinese Communist regime and other Asian Communist regimes and avoid actions which might contribute to their international standing and prestige. Continue to oppose the seating of any of these regimes in the United Nations, its agencies, or other international organizations.

28. Continue to recognize the Government of the Republic of China as the only legal government of China and its right to represent China in the United Nations, its agencies and other international organizations; seek to obtain increasing international support for the GRC and otherwise take steps to maintain and advance its international standing.

29. If any specific issues arise in our relationships with unrecognized Communist regimes where efforts at negotiation of these issues would seem to produce a net advantage to the United States, be prepared to negotiate such issues without implying recognition of such regimes.

30. Continue present restrictive policies on travel of Americans to Communist China, North Korea and North Viet Nam except where such travel will further U.S. national interests and the objectives set forth in this policy.

[*Numbered paragraph 31 (8 lines of source text) not declassified*]

32. Encourage regional and Free World cooperation advantageous to U.S. objectives through such measures as appropriate support of the Colombo Plan, ECAFE, and regional undertakings such as the Mekong Valley Project and the Southeast Asian telecommunications network.

33. The United States should not allow the attitudes and emotions of European countries to influence unduly actions considered essential to attaining or preserving U.S. objectives in the Far East.

Military

34. Ensure a strong U.S. military position in the West Pacific area as clear evidence of U.S. capability and intent effectively to fulfill all of our treaty commitments in the Far East, and be determined and show our determination to use military power as may be necessary to protect our allies and friends from Communist aggression.

35. Promote and strengthen our multilateral (SEATO, ANZUS) and bilateral (with Korea, GRC, Japan and the Philippines) defense arrangements in the West Pacific and develop wider understanding of common purposes among all our allies and other friends in the Far East.

36. a. Through military and support assistance and other measures, support to the extent practicable and necessary in the interests of U.S. security the maintenance by free Asian states, requesting such support, of military forces which (1) are capable of maintaining internal security and of identifying and delaying Communist aggression and which (2) together with U.S. and other allied military power are capable of coping with, and thereby deterring, Communist aggression.

b. Also be prepared to provide limited military assistance to selected free Asian nations which are demonstrating a willingness to defend and strengthen their independence, in order (1) to influence such nations toward a Free World alignment, or (2) to seek to prevent them from falling within the Communist sphere of influence.

37. a. Except under circumstances approved by the President, do not agree to GRC, ROK or GVN offensive actions against Communist territory.

b. Under circumstances approved by the President, agree to actions by the GRC, ROK or GVN against Communist China, North Korea, and North Vietnam which are prompt and clear retaliation against a Communist attack, provided such retaliation is against targets of military significance which meet U. S. criteria as to feasibility

and chance of success and which are selected with due consideration for the risk of provoking heavy Communist reaction against free Asian countries.

38. a. In the event of unprovoked Communist armed attack against U.S. military or non-military personnel, aircraft, or vessels outside Communist territory, U.S. forces in the area will take against the Communist attacking force during the course of the attack aggressive protective measures, including if necessary and feasible, immediate pursuit of the Communist attacking force into hostile airspace or waters.

b. In addition to the action directed in a above, and as constitutionally authorized and specifically approved by the President, take such additional punitive action as may be necessary and appropriate.

Economic

39. Vigorously support and encourage sound economic growth and development in the less developed areas of the Far East in order to strengthen their orientation toward the Free World and to assist the governments of the areas in their efforts to give their peoples a sense of present progress and future hope and to strengthen their orientation toward the Free World. Make U.S. public capital available in adequate amounts on a long-term basis for the purpose of supplementing the capital available from other sources for sound economic development in less developed areas. Continue to emphasize U.S. technical assistance programs.

40. a. In supporting and encouraging sound economic development in the less developed nations of the Far East, do not encourage aspirations for economic development in excess of economic capabilities, or unrealistic expectations of external economic assistance, and accordingly seek to support economic actions which are within the limits of practical realities.

b. While recognizing that the basic initiative as well as the primary responsibility for economic growth, and for providing the bulk of the resources required for development, must remain with the less developed nations themselves, continue the present vigorous U.S. effort in the less developed areas of the Far East.

c. Avoid giving the impression that the United States is guaranteeing or underwriting the achievement of specific rates of economic growth or the fulfillment of over-all economic targets in less developed countries.

41. Emphasize the broader objectives of economic development which include enhancement of the dignity of the individual and the preservation of human freedoms as well as the defeat of poverty, disease and undernourishment.

42. In the administration of U.S. bilateral aid programs give due weight to the advantages of (a) impact-type projects, and (b) projects which would make a significant contribution toward closer cooperation among the free nations of the Far East and between those nations and the rest of the Free World.

43. Continue, to the fullest extent practicable and taking into account all relevant economic and political considerations, to utilize U.S. assistance so as to promote and encourage private enterprise in the less developed countries of the Far East.

44. Utilize and support the efforts of Free World international institutions to the maximum extent possible to promote economic development and to bring about economic reforms in the less developed nations of the Far East.

45. Consider the channeling of some development assistance through regional development programs in the Far East if the governments concerned clearly manifest a desire for such regional programs and are willing to join in their financial support, and if such programs appear to offer real advantages over bilateral programs. However, do not become a member of any regional financing institution in the area.

46. a. Encourage free industrialized nations, including Japan and Australia, to contribute to promoting sound economic growth in the less developed nations of the Far East by facilitating the movement of private capital and by supplying public capital.

b. Encourage U.S. private industries and foundations to participate increasingly in providing investment capital and technical know-how required for economic growth of free Far Eastern nations, especially the less developed countries.

c. Encourage governments of individual less developed nations to follow policies and develop institutional arrangements which would facilitate mobilization of local capital for domestic economic development and would promote both domestic and foreign private investment.

d. Encourage less developed nations to undertake desirable political, economic, and social reforms, to help remove some of the obstacles to economic development.

47. a. Wherever feasible without creating antagonism in Free World nations toward the United States, encourage those nations of the Far East which are particularly vulnerable to Communist subversion to minimize their political and cultural contacts with the Sino-Soviet bloc to avoid extensive use of Sino-Soviet bloc technicians, and to limit other Sino-Soviet bloc economic contacts to those required for the conduct of such trade and economic aid programs as they consider it advisable to accept.

b. Encourage free Far East countries to orient their economies toward the Free World and to rely primarily on non-Communist markets and sources of supply for trade, technicians, capital development and atomic development. Make the less developed nations fully aware of the opportunities open to them to achieve economic progress through expanding trade with the United States and the rest of the Free World, through private capital and through the effective utilization of the economic and technical assistance offered by the United States and other Free World nations.

c. Alert less developed nations to the probability that the Sino-Soviet bloc will attempt to utilize trade and assistance programs as a technique for political subversion. However, recognizing that a number of less developed nations can be expected to trade with and accept economic assistance from the bloc whenever it appears to be economically or politically advantageous to them, maintain a flexible posture which seeks to minimize damage to U.S. prestige in the event of acceptance by less developed nations of the area of economic relations with the Sino-Soviet bloc.

d. In general, avoid attempts to counter each and every move in the Sino-Soviet bloc offensive. However, such measures as may be feasible in particular circumstances (including in very exceptional cases only direct actions in aid or trade taken specifically for this purpose) may be taken to discourage less developed nations from: (1) accepting Sino-Soviet bloc aid in certain particularly sensitive fields of a kind or on terms which would be damaging to their security, and (2) engaging in trade with the Sino-Soviet bloc at levels sufficient to create undue economic dependence on the bloc, or on terms or under conditions seriously prejudicial to U.S. interests.

48. Take all feasible measures to increase the opportunities of free Far Eastern countries for trade with each other and with the United States and other Free World countries, having due regard for national security and total national advantage and taking into account the impact on our foreign policy objectives (especially the collective security effort) of any proposed actions which would adversely affect imports from friendly countries.

49. Conduct the disposal of U.S. surplus agricultural products abroad so as to be consistent with and give support to our foreign policy objectives and to avoid material injury to the trade of friendly nations.

50. Make a special, sustained effort to promote the education of an expanding number of technically competent non-Communist civilian and military leaders; and stress the importance of developing adequate managerial and executive skills.

51. a. Continue to apply U.S. financial controls against, and an embargo on trade with, Communist China and North Korea, and an embargo on exports to North Viet Nam.

b. Urge other Free World countries to maintain the current level of multilateral export controls on trade with Communist China, North Korea and North Viet Nam. In support of this effort, without frustrating the multilateral embargo program, endeavor to handle questions of routine exceptions in such manner as to preserve and foster the willingness of other countries to retain the present level of controls. Seek bilaterally to encourage individual Free World countries, wherever clearly feasible and desirable from a foreign policy standpoint, to maintain unilateral controls toward Communist China at a more restrictive level than the multilateral controls.

Information and Cultural

52. a. Operate informational, cultural and exchange programs at levels adequate to support U.S. objectives in the area, strengthening them if necessary.

b. Make a special effort to include in such programs influential individuals who might be weaned away from pro-bloc sympathies.

c. Seek, by appropriate means, utilizing Asians to the greatest extent feasible, to (1) increase the understanding and orientation of Asian peoples toward the Free World and (2) convince them of the American economic and military capability to preserve security within the area in concert with other free nations; (3) build confidence in American Free World leadership through appropriate interpretation of the character and institutions of American civilization; and (4) expose the menace of Chinese Communist imperialism and world Communism pointing out to Asian peoples that their self interest, welfare and freedom will be furthered by opposition to Communism.

d. In our determined efforts to oppose Communist aggression and expansion, take care to emphasize to Asians that we stand for positive constructive actions and objectives and that we are animated by a desire to further the interests, welfare and freedom of the Asian people themselves.

Other

53. Special attention should be paid to the key roles which Japan and India can play in contributing to greater non-Communist strength in the Far East, and they should be encouraged to assert their influence toward countering the outward thrust of Communist power in ways compatible with U.S. interests and the interests of other Free World countries.

54. Seek to induce selected industrialized nations of Western Europe and other Free World countries to increase their contributions to the security and progress of the non-Communist areas of the Far East.

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49. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, September 27, 1959—1 p.m.

822. Department telegram 746.[2] Separate Top Secret message being sent today gives details on very satisfactory progress made by Military Advisers on MPO Plan 5B and remaining action now required of Council Representatives.[3] (Delay in transmitting that message occasioned by necessity coordination between myself and Admiral Felt who had to depart for Saigon before draft completed.) As will be seen from that message Plan 5B with modifications was approved by Military Advisers. Action included listing of forces "which might be made available" from all eight countries. While not formal and final governmental commitment such action is strong moral commitment and presumably made under instructions in each case. For most part offers were substantial. UK, New Zealand and Australia offered one infantry battalion each to form brigade group to provide own transportation and logistic support and to start arriving D plus two. France offered one infantry battalion but requires some transport and logistic support. Thailand one infantry battalion fully supported; will increase to one

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2759. Top Secret; Priority; SEATO. Repeated priority to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 746, September 25, the Department requested an analysis of the 11th Meeting of the SEATO Military Advisers, which concluded on September 24.

[3] Reference is to telegram 821 from Bangkok, dated September 25 but apparently sent later. In it, Johnson reported that the Military Advisers had agreed on a draft of the directive mentioned in paragraph 14 of MPO Plan 5B/59 (see footnote 5, Document 38) to be forwarded to the Council Representatives for approval. Johnson also reported that subsequent to the Military Advisers' meeting, which had decided to defer any recommendation of an "appointed nation," he had met with Admiral Felt and Horace Smith, Ambassador to Laos. Their joint recommendation was that the United States should support Thailand as the "appointed nation," a Thai officer as commander of any SEATO force, and a U.S. officer to command any field force. (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/9–2359; included in the microfiche supplement) In telegram 791 to Bangkok, October 1, the Department approved this recommendation with the stipulation that agreement be negotiated on a "contingent command structure only." (Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/10–159)

Additional information on the Military Advisers meeting is in CINCPAC message 270730Z to JCS, DA IN 249622, September 28. (Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Project Clean Up; included in the microfiche supplement)

RCT if US provides needed additional support. Pakistan one brigade group available within three weeks request, but "subject US–Pakistan bilateral agreement on transportation and support". Philippines engineer and ordnance units but no combat forces. All except France and Philippines also offered air units.

This substantial progress Military Advisers together with agreement yesterday on Council Representatives communiqué[4] represents encouraging advance by SEATO. However, must recognize major differences remain unresolved. That is, at least France, UK and New Zealand apparently would not be willing consider implementing Plan 5B unless and until there is clear "proof" of overt invasion by Viet Minh forces. Thailand would not act until after fall Phong Saly and Sam Neua. Question is what is to be done if UN restraints fail and, as in this event is most likely, without overt Viet Minh invasion, hold of RLG weakened by PL action supported from North Vietnam to point coalition government or take-over by PL seems probable. While we can hope UN action will continue prove effective and give us time strengthen RLG, this latter situation is one most likely to face SEATO if UN action not effective and SEATO is far from agreement as to what it would do in this eventuality.

Johnson

[4] The communiqué of the Military Advisers meeting, dated September 24, is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, October 19, 1959, p. 564. A communiqué of the Council Representatives meeting is *ibid.*

50. Record of the Informal SEATO Council Meeting, Washington, September 28, 1959[1]

[Here follow a list of persons present (24) and the record of Secretary Herter's review of the Camp David meetings and of Assistant Secretary Parsons' analysis of developments in the People's Republic of China.]

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by Emmons and approved by G. Frederick Reinhardt on October 14. The full text is included in the microfiche supplement.

Secretary General's Comments

The Secretary then noted that the various member countries of SEATO had assumed certain obligations under the Manila Pact in respect of Laos and asked the Secretary General of SEATO, Mr. Pote Sarasin, if he would care to comment.

The Secretary General expressed his gratitude for this opportunity to report to the Council members, particularly concerning the problem in Laos. He stated that the Council Representatives in Bangkok had met six times during September and that his intention was to discuss the political aspects of the Laotian problem rather than those on the military side. The Secretary General then reviewed briefly the sequence of events in Laos until he had departed from Bangkok on September 23, mentioning the desertion of two Pathet Lao detachments and the significant stepping up of military operations on August 30, when four or five Pathet Lao battalions had reportedly moved in. The Council Representatives had endeavored to analyze the reasons for this action by the Communists—was it, in fact, an action or a reaction? Mr. Sarasin believed that it could have been a reaction to the efforts of the Royal Laotian Government to integrate the Pathet Lao into Government forces, a move which the Communists may have found unsatisfactory, or it possibly could have represented a new initiative by the Communists in an effort to reinvoke the terms of the Geneva Treaty. There was no doubt that in these actions there had been intervention by the Northern Vietnamese; the evidence of this was to be found among refugees coming back from the affected areas and in the indication of deep Laotian concern over the situation which was evident in their appeal for United Nations forces. A further possibility was that the Communists might have been endeavoring to revive the International Control Commission; they had asked for another Geneva conference to settle the issue and this also might be considered further indication of Communist intent to intervene in Laotian affairs.

On September 4 the Foreign Minister of Laos[2] had got in touch with the Thai Foreign Minister[3] and with the Secretary General, himself, and had asked for a meeting. This meeting took place with the Thai Acting Foreign Minister and the Secretary General in Bangkok on September 7. The Foreign Minister of Laos was at that point very much alarmed over the possibility of the imminent fall of Sam Neua and deeply concerned that if it did fall its recovery by Laotian forces would be most difficult.

[2] Khamphan Panya.
[3] Thanat Khoman.

Also on September 7, the Laotian Minister had appealed to the United Nations to send forces and had asked the Secretary General what SEATO would do if Laos called for similar aid from the SEATO Organization. The Secretary General had explained to the Foreign Minister the Articles of the Manila Treaty which would apply in such a situation. He had also suggested to the Minister the usefulness of having Lao representatives visit neighboring non-SEATO countries such as India to inform them of developments in Laos.

For four or five days after the Laotian appeal to the United Nations, there was little or no Pathet Lao military action and the insurgents thereafter pulled back. The Secretary General noted that the Council Representatives believed that the presence of a United Nations Subcommittee in Laos has been of great benefit in the situation. The Council Representatives had also raised the question of quietly sending individual representatives from member countries to Vientiane for the purpose of keeping contact with the Lao Government and of reporting to their own governments upon the situation in Laos.

The Proposal for the SEATO Secretary General to Visit Vientiane

The Secretary General then raised the desirability of his making a visit to Vientiane, a matter upon which he asked for the views of the Council. He noted that the Council Representatives had discussed this matter at some length and that there had been agreement among them that the visit, in any case, should not take place until there had been an invitation from the Royal Government of Laos.

Whether or not he should make this visit had not, however, been decided in principle by the Council Representatives. For his part, the Secretary General believed that it would be useful for him to establish liaison with the Government of Laos. Such a visit would also have the advantage of increasing the confidence of the Royal Government of Laos through this indication of SEATO's interest in the Laotian situation; it also might act as a deterrent to the Laotian Government's making any rash appeal to SEATO without adequate consultation or advance warning.

The Secretary General said that the Council Representatives had agreed that SEATO must give every support to the action of the United Nations in Laos, that it must give moral support to the Royal Government of Laos and that a breathing spell was now occurring in Laos of which advantage must be taken to strengthen the Laos Government in meeting this threat to its independence and integrity. The Secretary General noted that the Council Representatives had issued a communiqué on September 25, after his departure from Bangkok, at the conclusion of the Military Advisers meeting. He had not heard what had been the outcome of that latter meeting.

The Secretary expressed his gratitude for the excellent report of the Secretary General and stated that two important questions seemed to rest with SEATO for the moment (1) the Secretary General's possible visit to Laos and (2) the report of the Military Advisers meeting at Bangkok just concluded of which we had not yet seen the results.

The Situation in Laos

The Secretary indicated his interest in hearing from the other members of the Council who were present. Mr. Casey, however, considered that it might be more appropriate for them to get the American point of view first, a suggestion to which the Secretary acceded.

The Secretary then summarized the views of the United States toward the Laotian problem in the following general terms. He noted that we had all been through a trying period which was due, to a large extent, to the problem of interpreting the facts of the situation in Laos. The single greatest problem still remained the differing interpretation of these facts between the various SEATO members; there had otherwise been close agreement on our approach to the situation. The Government of Laos had been extremely worried about its ability to cope with the developments, had made an appeal to the United Nations and had been on the point of addressing a similar appeal to SEATO, both without prior consultation with any other nation (the Secretary General confirmed this). The United States believed that (1) the Communist take-over of Laos, if successful, would not stop there but would present a threat to all of Southeast Asia, (2) the Government of Laos is weak and we have a responsibility, as part of our SEATO Treaty obligations, to strengthen that Government. The question then is, "What can we do individually or collectively to achieve a strengthening of the Government?" and we must think not only in military terms but also in terms of the long-term need to build up Laos in other ways.

The Secretary emphasized the United States' belief that a continuing United Nations presence in Laos is important; the United Nations Subcommittee has already served to improve the morale of the Laotian Government and has had the effect of slowing down the military action along the border. The United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Hammarskjold, is worried about the procedural side of the Security Council action in creating the subcommittee. The United States, nevertheless, believes that a precedent for such action is to be found in the Spanish case; in any event, it would certainly appear that the Subcommittee should stay in Laos as long as is necessary to obtain a full and complete report upon the situation there. We very much hope that the Subcommittee, itself, will agree upon the desirability of this course. Mr. Hammarskjold evidently feels, however, that the continued pres-

ence of the United Nations in Laos may require a new mandate from the General Assembly to supplant the present one from the Security Council.

The Secretary then stated that the United States would favor a visit by the SEATO Secretary General to Vientiane on the following grounds: (1) if the Royal Government of Laos invited him to come, such an invitation would reflect its belief in the advantages of establishing liaison with SEATO through the Secretary General on a consultative basis which would be normal under the terms of the Manila Treaty, (2) the Secretary General through such a visit might be able to insure that there would be no premature or panic request by the Royal Government of Laos for SEATO forces.

The discussion then passed to the other representatives around the table. Mr. Casey observed that Australia was convinced that the Royal Government of Laos must not be allowed to fall to the Communists. There were both political and military weapons available to prevent this. Australia would be glad if the political weapon, represented by the United Nations, was fully exploited in the first instance and hoped that it might succeed. The United Nations presence in Laos was achieved in a painless manner, has had a calming effect on the Laotian Government and has tended to restore confidence. He believed that the members of SEATO must fully support the independence of Laos and that the United Nations card must be played to the limit by inducing the United Nations Subcommittee to remain in Laos as long as possible. Mr. Casey believed that all of the member Governments should try to urge the Subcommittee to remain and that if and when the Subcommittee thought it necessary to leave Laos, some other form of United Nations presence should be substituted. He urged that every effort be made to build up the Royal Government of Laos morally, politically, and militarily. As of assistance in doing so, Australia was of the opinion that Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone should make some sort of statement to the effect that, while Laos would not want the return of the International Control Commission, it would support the principles of the Geneva Agreement, and that while it would not join in military alliances in contravention of that Agreement, it must not be stopped from accepting the normal forms of outside aid necessary to its stability and the maintenance of its independence.

Mr. Casey emphasized that SEATO should be brought to a position of readiness to move in the Laotian situation if necessary. For the moment, overt evidence of the intervention of North Vietnam was not strong and a high priority should be accorded to the establishing of evidence sufficiently firm so that it could be brought to public knowledge. If United Nations presence in Laos failed in the long term, SEATO must then be ready to undertake its obligations under Article

IV of the Treaty. If this were to happen, SEATO should avoid becoming involved, however, in a long drawn-out jungle war such as had been fought in Malaya.

Mr. Casey expressed the view that if SEATO is called upon to act in Laos, its objectives should be (1) maintenance of the Royal Government of Laos, (2) military protection of at least the main centers of population in the southern part of Laos, (3) approval, in principle, of advance military planning, and (4) economic support for Laos.

With regard to the visit of the Secretary General to Vientiane, Mr. Casey noted that his Government was hesitant to have the Secretary General make such a visit while the United Nations Subcommittee was in Laos, since to do so might draw attention away from the United Nations aspects of a solution; the stress should now be on the political weapon being used in Laos. His personal views on the matter, however, were not rigid.

Monsieur Couve de Murville also attached the greatest importance to preserving the independence and integrity of Laos and stressed the implications of this for all of Southeast Asia. The French Government considered it most important to find the proper settlement of the Laotian problem. The French Foreign Minister noted that there had, however, been controversy among the various SEATO members as to the method of approaching the Laotian problem since it was most difficult to obtain accurate information as to the situation; the difficulties of terrain and the lack of communications rendered it uncertain as to what was actually happening.

The Minister went on to point out that the members of SEATO have a common purpose in Laos. There is certainly some evidence of Northern Vietnamese help to the Pathet Lao; although the form and degree of such help is not clear, we could assume that this is the case. The question of Laos is now in the hands of the United Nations, which is a good step, and there should be no hurry for the Subcommittee to complete its report. French information was to the effect that the Subcommittee would probably make its report by mid-October. There were two possible alternative steps which the United Nations might take thereafter. The first of these would be the establishment of a general committee of four or five States to be set up by the General Assembly. The second alternative might be for the United Nations Secretary General to send a personal representative to Laos to maintain contact with the Government and to report to him upon developments.

Monsieur Couve de Murville said that the French Government is inclined toward the second of these alternatives as being the more subtle, avoiding the problem of organizing a further Subcommittee and keeping in mind that there is precedent for such action. Since it would not be possible to maintain the present Subcommittee in Laos

indefinitely, we must face the prospect of a veto in the Security Council. The member governments of SEATO should, therefore, be prepared sooner or later to have the question go to the General Assembly and this might happen at the current session. The SEATO members should study what are likely to be the positions of the various United Nations members toward the foregoing alternatives.

Mr. Couve de Murville noted that the French Government would approve, in principle, a visit of the SEATO Secretary General to Vientiane provided that an invitation were issued by the Royal Government of Laos; the problem, however, would be one of timing and of the relationship of the visit to United Nations Subcommittee activities. He suggested that the various member governments should consult as to the timing of such a visit when an invitation had been received from Vientiane. The French Foreign Minister then reiterated his agreement with the Secretary that it was important to maintain the continuity of United Nations presence in Laos, but he believed that additional steps in this direction should await the report from the Subcommittee.

Mr. White (New Zealand)[4] stated that the New Zealand Government agreed upon the importance of having an adequate fact-finding operation in Laos and also concurred in the view that the United Nations Subcommittee has strengthened the morale of the Royal Government of Laos. It was the opinion of the New Zealand Government that the best course of action for SEATO was to support the United Nations fact-finding mission and to keep the United Nations' presence in Laos; while the Subcommittee remained in Laos, however, the New Zealand Government believed that nothing should be done which would cut across the lines of work of that Subcommittee. New Zealand, therefore, did not favor a visit of the Secretary General until the outcome of the Subcommittee's work had been made clear. A visit by the SEATO Secretary General might also tend to prejudice action in the General Assembly with respect to the future of the United Nations presence in Laos, a factor which should be taken into careful consideration.

Mr. White stated that his Government fully recognized the need for external economic and other support for the Royal Government of Laos in meeting internal resistance, but added that it was also of the opinion that a solution could not be obtained by engaging in jungle warfare at this stage. In the long term, Mr. White was of the opinion that the best prospect for the survival of the Royal Government of Laos would be its assumption of a generally neutral posture in the future.

[4] G.D.L. White, Chargé d'Affaires of the New Zealand Embassy.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister[5] concurred with what had been said in regard to the healthy effect which United Nations action in Laos had produced and stated that his Government believed that nothing should be permitted to interfere with United Nations action. The morale of the Royal Government of Laos needed strengthening and so did the economy of the country. It was also important that SEATO's continuing interest in Laos should be made evident. With respect to the proposed visit of the SEATO Secretary General to Vientiane, the Foreign Minister agreed with what had been said by the New Zealand representative to the effect that this trip should not be undertaken for the present.

The Philippine Ambassador[6] thanked the Secretary for his excellent review of the Khrushchev talks and for the briefings which had been given on Laos by the Department of State. He was gratified by the remarkably rapid 12-hour action of the United Nations in responding to the appeal from Laos and noted that a representative of the Philippine Government had been dispatched to Vientiane to keep it informed concerning developments. The Philippine Government favored a careful and continuing study of the Laotian situation by the Council Representatives in Bangkok.

The Ambassador took note of a statement by the President of the Philippines that the Philippine Government would honor its commitments under the Manila Treaty. He agreed with the comments of the Australian representative that there were two weapons, political and military, which could be used in the current situation. His Government strongly favored the policy of allowing the political weapon to be fully exploited and believed that the visit of the Secretary General to Vientiane should be deferred until the United Nations Subcommittee report had been received. He noted that his Government also favored a continuing United Nations presence in Laos and once again stressed the readiness of the Philippines to live up to its commitments under the Manila Treaty.

Mr. Khoman (Thailand) stated that the Thai Government would honor its commitments under the Manila Treaty, Article IV of which extends protection to Laos. It was his view, however, that the Secretary General could hardly fail to visit Vientiane as a logical consequence of his position in the SEATO organization, although the timing of such a visit must be considered. He believed that the Royal Government of Laos had showed commendable restraint in not immediately invoking the terms of the Manila Treaty, as it might have done. The Minister was of the opinion that the visit of the Secretary General to Vientiane must be considered in the light of SEATO commitments

[5] Manzur Qadir.
[6] Carlos P. Romulo.

under the Treaty and believed that the timing of the visit should also be viewed in relation to the degree to which the United Nations Subcommittee has completed its work. Such a visit might also serve, in effect, to keep SEATO out of the Laotian picture by preventing an unforeseen or precipitate appeal to SEATO for aid. In any event, he thought it would be very bad if an invitation came to the SYG from Laos and it was not promptly accepted whatever the timing of the actual visit. He added that Thailand fully supported the United Nations action with regard to Laos, which his Government considered to have been most effective.

Mr. Khoman then observed that the situation in Laos might continue for a long time and that a United Nations Subcommittee and a personal representative of the SEATO Secretary General might well be able to operate side-by-side in Vientiane, there being a need for some form of relationship between SEATO and the United Nations on the Laotian problem. Every means available to SEATO in stabilizing the situation should be made use of and such a visit might tend to prevent the ultimate necessity for SEATO having to intervene. The usefulness of SEATO in stimulating action in the United Nations, should that become desirable, should also not be forgotten.

The Thai Minister then took strong exception to the thesis that the two northern provinces of Laos should be considered apart from the rest of the country, such a course not being recognized by the Manila Treaty; Thailand would abide fully by its commitments under that Treaty.

The British Ambassador[7] commented that even though an election might be in progress in Britain, British signature on the Manila Treaty remains in force and Britain will abide by the commitments thus undertaken. He stated that the members of SEATO must see to it that the Government of Laos does not fall to the Communists, that the country is free to develop, but that such development should take place within the framework of the Geneva Agreements. It would be to the advantage of the Laotian Government if it would stay within these limits, since the Laotians acquired certain rights under Article IV, which among other things provided for the unity of their country. It would be well for Laos to avoid getting into a situation similar to that which developed in Malaya, where Communist insurgency had required the employment of 25,000 regular troops, 50,000 constabulary, and 520,000 home guard and where the direct cost had been on the order of $500 million, to say nothing of the indirect cost of moving large segments of the population and dislocating the internal order of the country.

[7] Sir Harold Caccia.

The British Ambassador commented upon the problem of continuing the United Nations presence in Laos, stating that his Government thought a solution might be found in having a representative of the United Nations Secretary General sent there. This decision, however, did not appear to be needed until mid-October when the United Nations Subcommittee was evidently going to submit its report. The British Government was anxious for the Subcommittee to stay as long as it reasonably could and believed a hiatus must be avoided when the Subcommittee had terminated its immediate responsibilities in Laos. How such a hiatus was to be avoided would depend upon the members of the United Nations themselves and a big majority would be desirable in the General Assembly to deal with the problem.

Concerning the visit of the SEATO Secretary General to Vientiane, the Ambassador believed that he must accept if invited by the Royal Laotian Government. The British Government would, however, want to have a look at the matter of timing and would assume that the visit would be without publicity. The British, therefore, agreed in principle that such a visit should be made under these conditions but thought that it might be left to the Council Representatives to decide upon the timing. There might also be negative value in such a visit in the sense that it might tend to head-off an unwise request by the Laotian Government for SEATO intervention.

Mr. White agreed, in principle, with the statement of the British Ambassador and supported the view that the question of timing should be taken up in the Council Representatives.

Mr. Casey wondered whether it might not be desirable for some representative from one of the SEATO countries discreetly to suggest to Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone that there be private consultation with the Secretary General before the Royal Government of Laos were to issue him an invitation to make this visit. The Secretary inquired whether this might not appear to the Laotians as evidence of timidity on SEATO's part. Mr. Casey replied that much might depend on how the matter was presented. He suggested that the Secretary General might consider sending a representative who could go to Vientiane quietly for the purpose of sounding out the situation.

The Thai Foreign Minister suggested that the various SEATO Chiefs of Mission in Vientiane could perhaps consult with the Government prior to an invitation being sent to the Secretary General. Mr. Parsons expressed concern that SEATO not be made to appear too discouraging or disinterested in the welfare of Laos by seeming to hesitate in the face of a desire on the part of the Laotian Government for the Secretary General to make a visit.

The Secretary General commented that it is not within the power of SEATO to regulate the actions of the Royal Government of Laos. While he was not necessarily in favor of being in Vientiane while the

United Nations was also active on the scene, he would, at the same time, fear that the Royal Government of Laos might still act precipitately in appealing to SEATO and that his going there might be useful in forestalling such a move.

The Philippine Ambassador believed that SEATO should avoid crossing wires with the United Nations and that the timing of the Secretary General's visit to Vientiane was therefore of importance. If the Council Representatives were to decide that the time for such a visit was right, the Philippine Government would support the Secretary General's going to Vientiane. The French Foreign Minister considered it unlikely that, in the present circumstance, much was expected of SEATO by the Royal Laotian Government.

The Secretary General explained that, while he did not, at the moment, expect an invitation from Vientiane, it might come at any time and it might conceivably be related to the issuance of the report by the United Nations Subcommittee. The Secretary asked whether the Secretary General thought he should go to Vientiane as an investigator of the situation in Laos or merely in a representative capacity for SEATO. The Secretary General replied that there was need for SEATO to know at first hand the attitude of the Royal Government of Laos and how the general situation there might be developing.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister recalled that the Foreign Minister of Laos, Mr. Khamphan Panya, had recently passed through Karachi on his way to the General Assembly and had asked him whether SEATO would act if the Laotian Government appealed to it for help. The Pakistan Foreign Minister had replied that if the situation and the facts in Laos warranted, and if the other members of SEATO decided to act, Pakistan would support such action. The Laotian Foreign Minister had then assured the Pakistan Foreign Minister that it was not the intention of his Government to appeal to SEATO for the present.

Mr. Casey commented that Australia would live up to its SEATO commitments and noted that Australia was opening a full diplomatic mission in Vientiane. He urged that as many member Governments of SEATO as possible maintain diplomatic representation in Vientiane in order to keep in direct touch with the situation and to reassure the Laotians of their concern for that country's welfare. The Secretary endorsed Mr. Casey's suggestion of maintaining a permanent, or even perhaps a temporary, diplomatic representation in Laos.

The Secretary then summed up the consensus of the meeting by saying that if and when invited by the Royal Government of Laos, the SEATO Secretary General should accept the invitation. The Secretary General would, however, use his discretion as to the timing of his visit, taking into account the circumstances prevailing at the time, and keeping the Council Representatives informed. If, however, there were serious objection on the part of any member of SEATO to such a visit,

the Secretary General would consult the Council Representatives. Such consultation might also relate to the timing of the visit. It might be possible to determine from the tone of the invitation whether its motivation was inspired by panic or other precipitate ill-advised action or whether it was based upon more normal considerations.

Engineering School

The Secretary General noted that the SEATO Graduate School of Engineering had opened in Bangkok on September 8 and he hoped that the French, Pakistan and other member Governments could support the institution by providing professorial assistance.

Communiqué

The Secretary placed before the Council members a draft communiqué which was then agreed upon, with minor changes, and issued after the conclusion of the meeting. The text of this communiqué follows:

[Here follows the text of the communiqué which was released the same day; see Department of State *Bulletin*, October 19, 1959, page 565.]

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51. U.S. Minutes of the ANZUS Meeting, Department of State, Washington, October 26, 1959, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 3–5:30 p.m.[1]

[Here follow a list of persons present, introductory remarks, and discussion of East-West relations, the relations of the People's Republic of China with other nations, and Chinese and Soviet economic activities in Southeast Asia.]

Singapore

The Secretary suggested that although Singapore was not included as an item on the Agenda, it might be a good idea to say something about the situation there. Minister Casey said that he had visited Singapore on the way to the United States some two months ago. He said his talks in Singapore had been limited to Sir Robert

[1] Source: Department of State, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Edward P. Prince, Officer in Charge of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs, and John Gorden Mein, Director of the Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs. The full text of the minutes is included in the microfiche supplement.

Scott[2] and the Governor, Mr. Goode, and that on the basis of those conversations he had jotted down his impressions, a copy of which he made available to the other representatives (copy attached). He said that the outlook in Singapore was not pleasant. Mr. Casey said that the Prime Minister[3] had refused to see him. On his return to Australia, Mr. Casey will be in Singapore again and will make another effort to see the Prime Minister. He thought that the use of the base in Singapore in case of conflict was not very encouraging.

Admiral Dowling[4] commented that he agreed that, in so far as Malaya is concerned, there would be no merger between the Federation and Singapore primarily because of the Chinese in Singapore. He said that he had spoken with the Commander in Chief of the forces in Singapore and as a result believes the British themselves are conscious of the difficulties which might arise in keeping the base operable. He said the British are considering the problem and that the military are confident they will be able to hold on to it. The Australians, he said, have questioned whether the base will be operable in case of war. The British are working out some plan to work the base without Chinese labor but have not as yet made it known. Admiral Felt said that this was a very sensitive area but he was confident the British could defend it if the need should arise.

Mr. Parsons said he did not wish to take issue with Mr. Casey on his appraisal of the Singapore situation but he thought that some recent developments there would be of interest. The President of the Asia Foundation had been received recently by the Prime Minister fully expecting to be asked to close the Foundation's office in Singapore. The Prime Minister never mentioned the matter of closing the office but instead asked if the Foundation could arrange for some 50 students to come to the United States for further training. Another recent incident was that the Prime Minister had come to the home of the Consul General in Singapore for a dinner for Mr. Steeves (recently appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs) and in the conversation appeared very interested in what Mr. Steeves had to say about our policy in the area. The third recent development, he said, was that a United States naval vessel had refueled and the crew had been given shore leave in Singapore without any problem. Admiral Felt commented that he thought there would be no problem in the future concerning naval visits to Singapore.

Mr. Casey was asked whether he saw any evidence of movement of business from Singapore to Malaya. The Minister said there was some movement but not large. What some of the companies are doing,

[2] British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, resident in Singapore.

[3] Lee Kwan Yew.

[4] Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling, Chairman of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

he said, is organizing associated companies in the Federation. The Minister commented that in his opinion Lee is not a Communist, that his advice in fact is to the contrary, that he is a left-winger and an "anti." Lee still wants all the benefits of associations with us. Prime Minister Nash commented that Lee is a left-winger with considerable vision, [*1 line of source text not declassified*]. Mr. Nash thought the Prime Minister realized that Singapore could not live without the base there and that he wants the base there, among other reasons because of the foreign exchange it brings in. In Mr. Nash's opinion the Prime Minister wishes to get along with the United States and the United Kingdom and he will do all he can to assure this. Mr. Dulles said our estimate of the Singapore situation is about the same. We are inclined to think that the Prime Minister is highly intelligent, but one big question in our mind is whether he can keep control of his party. Mr. Dulles thought that the British were working pretty well with him and that we should try to work with the Prime Minister. Mr. Nash pointed out that the Prime Minister was a member of the group that went to London to negotiate the constitution for Singapore. He thought that we would be placing the wrong interpretation on Lee's action if we thought he wanted to go the wrong way.

Agenda Item 4. Laos.

The Secretary asked Mr. Parsons to introduce the subject of Laos. Mr. Parsons commented that Prime Minister Phoui is in Washington at the Walter Reed Hospital undergoing checking but wants to return to Laos as soon as possible. Mr. Parsons reviewed briefly recent developments in Laos. He said that the pressure on Laos from the Viet-Minh was supported by the Peiping and Moscow radios. Also, the Communists had made use of the Pathet-Lao movement. We regarded the recent actions in Laos as Communist probing at a very weak spot. We were still looking for some means to meet this situation when, to our surprise, the Government of Laos appealed to the UN and indicated it would also appeal to SEATO. We exercised what influence we could and as a result the Government did not appeal to SEATO. The UN action has had a tranquilizing effect. We are now faced with the problem as to what should be the nature of the UN presence in Laos. Mr. Parsons said that we favor a UN presence and have worked out an understanding on this with the Secretary General of the UN.

Mr. Parsons said that our attitude toward the Phoui Government is that it is probably the best government one can find for Laos at the present time. Phoui is a man of common sense who works closely with us and with the free world. He has difficulties, however, in holding the other elements in Laos together and we would want to help Phoui in maintaining proper unity. He said that we would counsel moderation to the Lao Government on any stand it takes internationally. It would

help if the Lao Government would reiterate that it does not intend to have foreign troops or bases on its territory, that it intends to maintain neutrality and not to be provocative. Phoui's mandate expires this year and there are some elements that want an unconstitutional solution. We would oppose this. There are two basic problems facing us: 1) how to continue our aid program to Laos, and 2) how to advise and assist the Government in Laos in coming to grips with its internal security problem. There is no doubt that the Pathet-Lao is an arm of international Communism. The recent trouble in that country results from the fact that Laos has been doing relatively well, thus causing the Communists to try different tactics. In our dealings in Laos, we have worked as closely as possible with the French in view of their special position there. Discussions with the French and the British have taken place to make sure there is no friction among the three.

Mr. Nash asked how far Laos could have gone without American aid, to which Mr. Parsons replied not very far. The Prime Minister wondered how far we have the right to interfere with the internal affairs of that Government, and why we should breach the Geneva Accords. Mr. Parsons pointed out that we are not a party to these Accords. The Secretary pointed out also that according to the legal experts the training of the Laotian forces is not a breach of the Accords. Prime Minister Nash wanted to know why the French had stationed only 300 troops in Laos when they had been authorized by the Accords to station up to 3,000. Mr. Parsons commented that it was probably due to commitments elsewhere. The Prime Minister wondered if there had not been a breach of the Geneva Accords by the French in transferring their facilities to the United States. Mr. Parsons said that there had been no transfer of facilities. He said that we are collaborating with the French, and the facilities are under French supervision. Also, we have been giving equipment to the Lao Army since 1950.

The Prime Minister wondered how much danger there was of getting mixed up with local politics in Laos and how far we have the right to go in that country. Mr. Parsons commented that we deal with the Prime Minister and the Government in Laos in the same way as we do with that of any other country. He said Laos lacks everything, including trained people and looked for guidance from people of experience more than any other Government. The French have advisors in every office of the Laotian Government. Then there is our own financial advisor. The Secretary said that there is, of course, the general ethical problem if you give technical assistance of how much interference in internal affairs is necessary and proper. Certainly there was no influence on our part when Laos appealed to the UN, for we were not consulted and were taken by surprise.

Prime Minister Nash commented that the appeal by Laos to the UN could not have been effective without the action taken by the United States. He thought it had been very effective. He wondered whether our purpose was not to maintain in office an existing government which we wanted rather than one which corresponded with Laotian wishes. Mr. Parsons explained how the Government had come into office, referring to the November 1957 agreement and the Lao constitutional procedures and stating that in our opinion Phoui was a wise and able person, by far the most capable man in his country. Mr. Nash remarked that, rightly or wrongly aid had been given by the United States to the Laotian Government and by the Viet-Minh to the Pathet-Lao. He wondered whether the two were not comparable and how far we had the right to interfere in this way. The Secretary replied that it was not stretching matters much to say that if it had not been for our aid to Europe following World War II, there would be no free Europe, and that what we were doing in Laos and other countries was, in principle, no different. He commented that basically the United States is as isolationist as ever and we would like to get rid of some of the responsibilities which we have assumed in world affairs. We hang on to our responsibilities abroad, he said, because we see no alternative but it is done in the interest of the free world.

Mr. Casey said he endorsed what Mr. Parsons had said. Laos is a very backward country. It is menaced by outright invasion, stimulation of internal revolt and the dissipation of Pathet-Lao forces throughout Laos which threaten the country with Communist subversion. Any one of these factors could bring Laos within the Communist orbit. It is our clear obligation and aim to stop this from happening. Our means of doing this is the political one, that of the UN presence. He said that he clearly agreed a UN presence is the next step. As to the internal situation, what we are trying to do is not to interfere in domestic politics but to maintain democratic processes there. That is our aim the world over and it is proper, he thought. The United States has maintained the Laotian Armed Forces for over five years and supplied technical and economic aid. In talking with Prime Minister Phoui on Saturday, the latter did not say very much new but endorsed what had been done in Laos. (Minister Casey said that he had given Mr. Parsons a record of the talk.) One of the things that can be done in Laos is to maintain the prestige of Phoui and the standing of his Government. If Phoui could be given something to take back with him, it would enhance his prestige at home. The Lao Foreign Minister had asked whether it would be appropriate to work toward a status similar to that of Austria, to which Mr. Casey had replied that such a solution appeared out of the question for it would mean complete neutralism. Mr. Casey said that we are quite legal and in order in trying to main-

tain Laos outside the Communist regime. He thought the UN action had been effective and the right step to take. Should, however, that not succeed, it is not impossible that Laos may need SEATO. Even under SEATO action, he believed he was right in believing that no attempt would be made to retake the two northern provinces if they had been overrun.

Minister Casey said that in recent conversations, including one with General Williams in Saigon, he had been told that Viet-Nam could not make a man or rifle available to Laos and he wondered if this was in fact the case and the reason for this. The Secretary explained that under Viet-Nam's agreement with us, they cannot make any equipment available without our permission. Minister Casey wondered whether the Vietnamese situation was in any way related to that in Laos. The Secretary said it depended to a large extent on what the Viet-Minh did. If they should move into Laos, it would be a matter of great concern to the exposed Vietnamese.

Minister Casey asked whether the UK saw the Laos situation the same as the United States. The Secretary replied that it did not entirely. He said that Selwyn Lloyd took very seriously the UK responsibility under the Geneva Accords and that he had a strong feeling that Laos should be a neutralist country. Mr. Parsons commented that at the time of the crisis there appeared to be some misunderstanding.

The Secretary said that he believed Agenda Item 5 could be taken up with Item 6 after lunch, and the meeting was adjourned for the luncheon.

Agenda Item 5. Review of SEATO activities, especially military planning against insurgency.

Agenda Item 6. Comments by military representatives.

The Secretary asked Admiral Dowling to introduce this item. Admiral Dowling referred to the meeting of the military representatives held in Bangkok September 22–25, adding that all of the eight nations had approached the problems before them with a sense of urgency, aware that anything could happen in Laos and that a military plan was necessary. He said that for 18 months there had been a plan but it had been most incomplete. At the meeting the military representatives had been conscious of the fact that as military advisers they were not committing their countries to war, nor were they committing forces to intervention, but were committing only forces to a plan, a plan which he hoped would not need to be implemented. He said there had been considerable agreement and that the consensus was that the meeting had been an important one. The Asian members particularly had begun to wonder if SEATO was anything more than a paper tiger and the efforts in Bangkok had been successful in satisfying the Asian

members that we mean business if business is needed and that there is a plan against insurgency. He said that the advisers had also provided a suitable guide for the necessary command organization as well as the role of the joint field forces commander when and if appointed. The role of the field forces commander is of great importance at the present time since it is not known who will be the "appointed nation" or who, in fact, will be the commander. The Admiral said that he did not propose going into the details of the plan except to indicate that the commitments of forces on the part of the members amounted to about one Division. There are two phases to be considered: 1) the initial movement of forces in the first few days, and 2) the follow-up movement. The terrain was very difficult and, judging from the experience in Malaya, military operations were not promising. There 200,000 men had been operating for ten years and it had been calculated that for every Communist terrorist killed or captured 1,300,000 man-hours were expended. Consequently, the plan for Laos calls not for fighting the Communists in the forest but for bolstering the Laotion forces by providing the rear guard and wherewithal for their advance operations. Before a military force can be put into the field, he said, not only would the approval of all eight nations be necessary, but there would also have to be decisions on the "appointed nation", phasing, financial support, etc. There are also important political factors which will have to be effected first. The military advisers' representatives in Bangkok are working on these problems with the Council of Representatives.

General Weir[8] said he had nothing to add to what Admiral Dowling had presented except to reiterate his remarks. He would like to stress, however, what is considered to be the correct role regarding the Lao situation, that is, that if a SEATO force should have to go into Laos, it would be best that it go in to support a Laotion force and that it would be extremely unwise for us to get involved in any action against the insurgents themselves.

Admiral Felt said that he agreed but he thought that certain clarification was necessary so there would be no misunderstanding. He said that whereas none of us wishes to be involved in a large-scale conflict with insurgents, we had in fact agreed to engage in combat operations with the insurgents by providing air support, communcations, furnishing of psychological warfare units and "special operations." These do not involve large numbers of people but it is envisaged that these tasks will be performed. Admiral Dowling concurred.

The Secretary said that from reading the despatches on the deliberations in Bangkok, he got the feeling that each nation was taking its responsiblities seriously and that SEATO was in fact an organization

[8] Major General Cyril E. Weir, Chairman of the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff Committee.

in being and not only a paper organizaton; also, that something substantial which would have considerable moral effect in the area had been decided upon. This impression had given him great satisfaction. He thought the decision was a big step forward and that a moral impetus had been achieved. Agreement on a plan was a very different thing from the political decision to use the plan, but the military representatives deserved a great deal of credit for having put a plan together. He felt that we owed the military representatives a debt of gratitude for what had been done.

Admiral Dowling said he had something of the same feeling, that is, that with respect to the Asian members the results of the Bangkok meeting had given a certain uplift to the organization.

Admiral Felt said that the French have asked for permission to tell the Laotians about the plan. Since the meeting they have again raised this point, and undoubtedly will raise it again. He thought the military representatives would need some political guidance on this. The Secretary said that it was something that should be thought out, but his off-the-cuff reaction was against it. Mr. Casey indicated that he also was against it but he felt the Laotians might be told that if everything else failed, SEATO would live up to its obligations. Mr. Parsons said that if it became militarily necessary for Laos to know more than it does now, we might take a look at it but it did not appear to him to be politically necessary.

Prime Minister Nash said that he had not looked with favor on the need for a military plan at first because there was no definition of "insurgency." After another look at it, however, it seemed to him to be the same as planning for any military exercise in which New Zealanders take part. He had come to the conclusion, therefore that planning was logical and use of a plan was another thing altogether. He thought, however, there was still need to be clear that it was aggression we were fighting and not "insurgency." Any plan to combat Communist insurgents when only internal, in his opinion, lacked political reality and there would be difficulty in justifying such intervention in the UN. The Prime Minister referred to a leak after the SEATO meeting at Wellington and said he was concerned that there might also be leaks now as to any military plan undertaken by the SEATO organization. He was not happy with the prospect of any intervention by SEATO. He thought a way out of the situation had been the appointment by the UN of a group of UN observers and he thought that this action was much sounder than anything SEATO might have done.

The Prime Minister said that he had no hesitation in saying New Zealand would live up to its obligations. He thought that the situation had been safeguarded by the UN action and that the less SEATO is mentioned the better.

The Secretary said he thought that any indiscretion which had served to let it be known that SEATO would do something might not have been too bad a thing. At the moment the UN presence has helped the situation and a continuing UN presence might be a good thing. He said that the UN presence would probably simplify any action by SEATO which might later be necessary.

Mr. Casey referred to Articles 2 and 4 of the SEATO treaty. There was some general discussion of the need for consultation among the members and of a request from any member for action before anything was done. Prime Minister Nash remarked that Laos had never asked for SEATO assistance and Minister Casey replied that it was only with difficulty that we stopped them from asking.

Mr. Parsons expressed appreciation for the outstanding job Brigadier General Thornton[9] had done in Bangkok.

Mr. Casey said that he supposed some thought had been given to the political and military effect on North Viet-Nam of any action by SEATO and whether this might result in their having to put equal forces into Laos. Admiral Felt said that was a political matter. He did not feel that Laos would ask for help unless the situation in that country were very serious. The Secretary commented that the situation evidently was not that bad or Prime Minister Phoui would not be in this country at the present time. Minister Casey said that in his conversations with the Prime Minister the latter had indicated that there would be a need for small indoctrination units. There is the problem of language, but Mr. Casey thought the Laotians would probably raise this point with the United States. In reply to a question, Mr. Dulles said that the Filipinos engaged in Operation Brotherhood had worked primarily through interpreters and that the program, which is primarily medical, had been successful.

With reference to the need of keeping more Laotians informed and of bringing about a feeling of national unity, Prime Minister Nash suggested that it might be possible to get large numbers of transistors in at a small cost. Minister Casey said that Australia has sent in thousands of transistors already and since his conversation with Prime Minister Phoui, he has asked that more be sent.

Admiral Dowling said there had been some discussion at the military representatives meeting at Bangkok on how to reach the people in the countryside. There had been some discussion over the possibility of getting Laotians outside the country to make broadcasts and so on just as was done in the case of Malaya. The Secretary recalled that success there had only been achieved when villages had been surrounded by barbed wire in order to stop the flow of food and

[9] Brigadier L.W. Thornton of New Zealand, Chief of the SEATO Military Planning Office.

salt to the insurgents. Mr. Parsons said he agreed that statements and broadcasts on the basis of personal experience would be effective. He said that the problem is how to get something done, when each village is a world unto itself. He agreed with a remark by Mr. Nash that printed material was comparatively useless, adding that 85 percent of the people were illiterate.

Admiral Felt said that the objective should be to get these things done now. He also thought that there was a role to be played at this time by the Laotian Army which is actually not an army as we think of one but is divided into small groups which could easily be used as civil action groups as Magsaysay did in the Philippines. He said that it should be remembered that the Pathet-Lao have their two armed battalions still in existence terrorizing the villagers. It is necessary to obtain the confidence of the villagers by making them feel secure and this is a role which the Lao Army must play. He said that U Ne Win in Burma had also discussed with him this approach with relation to Burma. It was a terrific problem because the people are not on the side of the Army. If it were thought that the UN had completed its job, fighting could break out the day after they left.

Mr. Casey wondered whether we were likely to have Laos as a problem area for some time in the future. Admiral Felt commented that a tribe in Sam Neua, which straddles the border with North Viet-Nam, had recently refused to go with the insurgents and stayed with the Government forces. It was a question of the amount of security which they felt existed.

Mr. Casey said he would like to get some idea of what sort of UN presence is envisaged in Laos, whether it will be a multilaterally elected group or a representative of the Secretary General. The Secretary said that he had had a long correspondence with the Secretary General on this subject. The Secretary General prefers a personal representative because he can then handle the adminstrative details himself and will not be required to go to anybody for action. The Secretary said that we have not taken a strong position either way. If the Secretary General can work it out with the Security Council to send a personal representative and he can work it out in such a way as to avoid a Soviet veto, that would be good. The Secretary General feels that if there is a Soviet veto in the Security Council he can get a two-thirds vote in the General Assembly, and for this reason the Soviets might simply object to rather than actually veto the proposal. The Secretary said that the Secretary General had wanted to appoint a representative to cover a wider area than just Laos but that the opposition to this had been too great.

Prime Minister Nash commented that a personal representative could get a staff and that this seemed to be the best way out. Also, he said, the Secretary General had received a request from Laos to do

something and therefore has a basis on which to act. The Secretary General hopes that a reading between the lines of the group's report will provide a recommendation for his own one-man approach. Mr. Parsons commented that Prime Minister Phoui had said on the radio yesterday that a UN presence in Laos would be a good thing.

Mr. Casey asked whether the others wanted to discuss the matter of the "appointed nation." The Secretary said he would like to hear from the military on this point. Admiral Felt said that the military representatives at Bangkok had decided to leave that as a political decision but had drawn up a command structure which would be adaptable to any political decision. He said there had been no discussion of who in fact should be the "appointed nation."

Admiral Dowling said that General Cabal of the Philippines had tried to raise it late in the session at Bangkok. Admiral Felt reiterated that it was a political problem and emphasized that it should be considered very seriously.

Mr. Casey remarked that he understood that according to current thinking, Thailand would provide the SEATO commander and the United States would provide the force commander.

Mr. Nash said that in his opinion Thailand should be the last nation to be considered for SEATO commander and United States next to last. He thought that probably the best candidate would be Australia. Mr. Casey said he thought it should be the country providing the substantial force. The Secretary said that in his opinion the Prime Minister's suggestion had a great deal of merit. There is always the danger of repetition that the United States is trying to Americanize Laos. On the other hand, he said, we should keep in mind what we are trying to do and should not overlook the important role which the Thais will have to play since Bangkok would have to be the port of entry, headquarters, etc. He asked if the Thai unit was pretty good.

Admiral Felt replied that the Thais had only a battalion to offer in connection with the plan. He thought that it would be important that we move fast if any nation asks for help. Only three nations are in a position to do so in Laos: The United States, the Commonwealth (considered as a unit) and the Thais. Minister Casey said that his Government had not considered any country other than the United States and Thailand as a possible appointed nation. He said he could not speak for his Government, but his personal instinct was that Australia would not be as ambitious as that and that Australia would be happier with an American field commander.

Prime Minister Nash said that there are other conditions which would also have to be satisfied. Namely, that it is aggression from outside and that the action taken by the member countries is in accord with their constitutional processes. He said also that he would want to know what is meant by internal subversion. Minister Casey said that

Article 2 of the SEATO treaty covers the Laos situation. There was general agreement that consultation among the members of SEATO would have to follow before any action were taken on the request from the Lao Government.

The Secretary, referring to Admiral Felt's statement that there was need for a decision concerning the "appointed nation", wondered if, since the three participating countries were all members of SEATO, it would not be helpful for them to make a recommendation to the SEATO Council. Admiral Felt pointed out that it was more important to decide on who would be the field commander and that if the decision were made on the "appointed nation", it might not be possible to keep that secret and such a decision might in itself be considered provocative. From the military viewpoint it was important to know who the commanders would be because there is work to be done. Admiral Dowling also emphasized the need for decision on the field forces commander and referred to the expectation that deputies would be of other nationalities.

The Secretary said that the President had indicated that he would prefer that neither the SEATO commander nor the field forces commander be an American.

Minister Casey asked whether the Secretary had in mind recommending to Prime Minister Phoui that he make a statement reaffirming his country's position of political neutrality and adherence to the Geneva Accords. He thought such a commitment would be very useful from a public relations standpoint. Mr. Parsons said he had discussed this with Prime Minister Phoui. The Prime Minister had been receptive and this had been reflected to a slight degree in the statement made by the Prime Minister on the "Face the Nation" program. It had not, however, been as detailed as his statement last February.[10] Mr. Casey said he also had discussed this with Prime Minister Phoui and had suggested that he talk to the United States before seeing the U.S. press.

Admiral Dowling said that the recommendations of the military representatives had been passed to the Council of Representatives. Mr. Nash suggested that if Australia were not the "appointed nation" and one could get a very able man from France, it might be wise to select France for that role since they had more right in Laos than anybody else. The Secretary said he would wish to give that serious thought. He said he had had frank discussions with the French Foreign Minister concerning the differences between us and them on the Laos situation and the Foreign Minister had indicated that the answer was probably a complete change in French personnel in Laos.

[10] See footnote 2, Document 213.

Agenda Item 7. Indonesia and West New Guinea.

Minister Casey said that the situation as to West New Guinea had been quiescent for some time. Prime Minister Menzies is going to Indonesia early in December but his visit is strictly one of good will and will not result in any change in Australia's policy on the West New Guinea issue. The Dutch still fear that force might be used against West New Guinea primarily to establish a lodgment and they continue to be sensitive to the supply of arms to Indonesia except for internal security. The UK had an application for self-propelled landing craft but he had been successful in inducing the British Government to hold off any action on the application until after the British elections. The elections are now over and he has received a message indicating that the matter must again be considered. He had heard rumors that the Indonesians might possibly also wish to discuss with the British the acquisition of small naval vessels. Australia, he said, is concerned lest there be any build-up of forces beyond the point where they are necessary for internal security. He said that he saw no immediate menace, however.

Minister Casey said that the economic situation in Indonesia is bad. Col. Jani has been going around buying arms. When the matter was raised with Subandrio in the course of his visit to Australia, he replied that Indonesia is an archipelago and must be equipped with sufficient forces on Java to quell any disturbances in the outer islands. The Minister said he would be interested in knowing whether the United States has additional plans for assistance to Indonesia. He said that the United States has exercised the greatest deterrent to an Indonesian attack on West New Guinea but, because the force of a deterrent diminishes with the passage of time, it should be reactivated. The Minister said he would be most grateful if the United States could revive its deterrent at suitable intervals. The Secretary commented that this has been done at every opportunity. In reply to Mr. Casey's question whether these approaches have been made at more than one level, the Secretary said that they had been made at every level except Sukarno, who has not been approached directly.

Minister Casey referred to Minister Subandrio's talk with the Dutch Chargé, Mr. Hasselman, in which Subandrio said the presence of Dutch naval ships in Indonesian waters would be a casus belli. The Minister said he had been surprised by this but had been relieved to hear from Minister Luns that the Dutch did not take it seriously. Minister Casey wondered whether we took it seriously. The Secretary commented that he was inclined to take anything said by the Indonesians in that connection seriously, that there is nothing to prevent them from taking further anti-Dutch action. Mr. Parsons remarked that Foreign Minister Luns had expressed gratification over our re-

peated expressions of deterrence. The Secretary added that guerrilla warfare in Indonesia was about as difficult as in Laos and the distances were great. Mr. Dulles agreed that it was not easy to clean out the resistance. At the moment no great effort was being made to do that.

Mr. Casey said he wondered sometimes if Subandrio's statements on China were not for the purpose of rationalizing Indonesia's purchase of arms. Prime Minister Nash said he thought that Indonesians would break their word any time Sukarno thought it would serve their purpose to move against West New Guinea. The Secretary commented briefly on the Sukarno, Nasution and PKI balance of power in Indonesia, pointing out that Sukarno at the present time appears to have the edge. He said that it was hard to visualize how the Indonesians would get out of their present economic difficulties.

Mr. Casey reiterated that Australia would like to have the United States repeat at every opportunity its position against the settlement of the West New Guinea issue by force. He said Australia continues to be anxious over Indonesia and West New Guinea in particular. The Secretary asked whether Australia had formally recognized Dutch sovereignty over West New Guinea. Mr. Casey said that they had, many times.

Mr. Casey said that Cuba had recently sought to buy 45 mm. ammunition from the Australians. He said that the Australians had consulted the United States and as a result had turned down the application.

[Here follows discussion of the Middle East, contingency items, and the communiqué. For text of the communiqué, see Department of State *Bulletin,* November 16, 1959, page 708.]

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52. Memorandum of a Conversation, British Embassy, Paris, December 14, 1959, 2:15 p.m.[1]

US/MC/14

PARTICIPANTS

United States	*United Kingdom*
The Secretary of State	Foreign Secretary Lloyd

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by John W. Tuthill, Director of the Office of European Regional Affairs, on December 15, and approved in S on December 21. Herter, Lloyd, and the other participants were in Paris for the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting held December 15–17 and 22.

Mr. Merchant	Amb. Gladwyn Jebb
Mr. Reinhardt	Sir Anthony Rumbold
Mr. Bohlen	Sir Patrick Dean
Mr. Macomber	Minister David Ormsby-Gore
Mr. Kohler	Asst. Under Secretary Con D.W. O'Neill
Amb. Whitney	Pvt. Under Secretary Peter Ramsbotham
Mr. Farley	
Mr. Tuthill	

SUBJECT

Laos; SEATO Contigency Planning

After discussing other subjects, the conversaton turned to Laos.

Lloyd pointed out that the U.S. was not a party to the Geneva agreement. He stated that there is provision in the agreement against the stationing of foreign troops in Laos. Unless there is a "certain degree of aggression", Britain has an obligation not to send troops in.

Lloyd asked if the U.S. wished to intervene in the event that Pathet Lao was getting the upper hand. Secretary Herter added "if aided from the outside".

Lloyd stated that in an Alliance there was need for contingency planning; however, he did not wish to have a General discussing his "troops". He felt it unlikely that contingency planning could be kept within Western circles. The French opposed it.

Secretary Herter stressed the importance of the Thais. He had been impressed by the cheering way each of the Allies in SEATO had spoken up and had indicated a willingness to make a contribution. He pointed out that the picking of an "appointed nation" and Commanding General are dissimilar things.

Lloyd stated that for the moment there is a French impasse. Contingency planning is not possible and Couve would have to be convinced concerning the necessity for informal planning.[2] New Zealand wished to take action only in the event of "direct external aggression".

Lloyd stated that he did not mind planning if it was clear that it took a political decision for action. Secretary Herter agreed that the need was to move forward informally. Lloyd pointed out the difficulty of defining "Communist insurgency". He stated that he would like the French to take a more extensive view of their responsibilities. They had agreed to train 1500 men and had finally shown up with only 200. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

[*2½ lines of source text not declassified*] One of Lloyd's staff asked about the Hammarskjold Mission[3] which went out against the wishes

[2] Information on the talks on this issue held between Lloyd and Couve de Murville is in telegram 2655 from Paris, December 10. (*Ibid.*, 790.5/12–1059; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Reference is to U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld's trip to Laos in mid-November.

of the USSR. Hammarskjold had switched from political to economic problems and was favoring technical and financial assistance as well as contact with the North Vietnamese. He understood that the U.S. favored economic plans but opposed contacts with the North Vietnamese. The British felt that Hammarskjold should be encouraged and did not mind the contacts with the North Vietnamese. If no such contacts were made, the situation could go from bad to worse.

Secretary Herter stated that the U.S. supported economic surveys and technical assistance which could be dovetailed in with American aid. He was doubtful, however, about the desirability of contacts with the North Vietnamese.

Lloyd stated that the British objective was to obtain a neutral Laos looking towards the West. In order to obtain this, a certain amount of "indifference" from Laos' northern neighbors was necessary. The terrain is very dificult and infiltration is very easy. Lloyd pointed to the British experience in Malaya as evidence of the difficulty in stamping out a revolt.

Lloyd stated that the Russians have been fairly sensible and have asked Lloyd to help stop the trials. He doubted whether Hammarskjold could get very far, but felt he ought to try. He felt we might obtain an unexpressed agreement of the general desire not to turn the area into turmoil.

Secretary Herter stated that Hammarskjold may also ask for good treatment for the Communists in Vietnam. Secretary Herter stated that it would be highly undesirable if Dag Hammarskjold advocated better treatment for Communists in Vietnam. Mr. Merchant stated that the Laotian Government would be demoralized if Hammarskjold went in without our backing.

Lloyd stated that the Russians should be assured that the United States is not building up forces in Laos. Secretary Herter pointed out that Hammarskjold can see all and report. However, he wishes to do more. Lloyd favored finding out just what Hammarskjold wished to do.

53. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State[1]

London, January 5, 1960—7 p.m.

3355. For Steeves from Parsons. Contrary to expectation SEATO contingency planning came up in first session of discussions with Hoyer-Millar, Rob Scott, MacDermot and CRO representative afternoon fifth.[2] I am convinced U.K. not dragging feet and desires agreement on plan on informal basis previously agreed to by us. They do have domestic Parliamentary and external Geneva Accord problem and it is this which leads them to press so insistently for following formula:

"Armed action against the established government by organized bands or groups subject to such a degree of foreign direction, support or control as to amount to indirect external aggression."

CRO representative felt that despite Nash's moralistic outlook and aversion to military side of SEATO New Zealand may go far enough to permit completion plan. While not stated in meeting, I believe British would help with Nash if we can meet them on definition.

French are real problem with latest U.K. information indicating continued opposition from Couve de Murville. French Ambassador here today asked if we could have brief tripartite on this subject and U.K. representatives indicated that they hoped I would agree even though I will be in Paris several days hence. Assuming Barbour has no objection, I see no serious objection although we and British both conscious of need to avoid prior Western talks on SEATO in absence Asian partners. British present emphasized most undesirable raise subject at Council representatives meeting 8th both from New Zealand and French standpoint. They were, however, receptive to my personal suggestion of special informal meeting to try and wind up plan soon after January 8th meeting. They thought that it would help with French if I said to their Ambassador here roughly what I told Caccia some weeks ago, namely so far as U.S. concerned we regarded resort to SEATO as one of last phases in meeting future insurgence. During

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–560. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok, Paris, Vientiane, and Wellington.

[2] A memorandum of this conversation by Robert J. Ballantyne, Second Secretary of the Embassy in London, is *ibid.*, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Asia 1959–1960; included in the microfiche supplement. Assistant Secretary Parsons was in London, January 5–7, for talks with U.K. officials.

The British officials are as follows: Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar, Permanent Under Secretary, Foreign Office; Dermot MacDermot, Assistant Under Secretary in the Far Eastern Department, Foreign Office; Harry Twist, Head of the Southeast Asian Department, Commonwealth Relations Office. Sir Robert Scott became Head of the Imperial Defence College in January 1960.

this phase of conversation I specifically asked whether situation existing in Laos late last summer would fit their definition as expressed in formula above. They replied in affirmative without hesitation. Under these circumstances I would appreciate reply soonest as to whether Department considers we could meet British on this point.[3] Expect further discussion of subject probably afternoon 6th. You may wish also to speak to Booker[4] before replying.

Barbour

[3] In telegram 5122 to London, January 6, marked "For JG Parsons from Steeves," the Department raised several objections to the British formula for the definition of aggression but endorsed a proposal by the Embassy in Bangkok that the Council Representatives hold a special meeting in 3 weeks to consider the Military Advisers' request for political guidance on Laos contigency planning. (Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–560; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] M.R. Booker, Minister of the Australian Embassy in Washington.

54. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State[1]

London, January 6, 1960—8 p.m.

3374. To Steeves. From Parsons.

1. During meeting 6th with Rob Scott, MacDermot and Ministry of Defence representative,[2] British agreed that instructions could be issued to British Council representative to agree to [*in*?] informal off-the-record session January 8 to appointment of Thailand as "appointed nation". British understanding is that command structure under contingency planning for Laos would not come up January 8 meeting. (Ministry Defence representative read minutes of last Council representative meeting instructing Planning Office produce "summary".) In event command structure put forward as per Bangkok 259 sent Department 1807,[3] British Council representative would probably seek instructions, according impression left with me at meeting.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–660. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok.

[2] A memorandum of this conversation by Ballantyne is *ibid.*, 751J.00/1–660; included in the microfiche supplement. The Ministry of Defence official was Captain Hogg of the Royal Navy.

[3] In this telegram, January 6, Johnson suggested that the United States could if it chose present its thinking on the question of the "appointed nation" without forcing the issue to an immediate decision. (Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–660)

2. During meeting Deptel 5122[4] reached me. It appears that Department's analysis of British proposed change in terms of reference stressed "external aggression" rather than emphasizing "indirect" nature this aggression. This is key word as Rob Scott emphasized by commenting that without it there would be basic change in nature of plan. I am impressed that British have no desire to modify terms of reference to exclusion of insurgence. On contrary, they are prepared to act against insurgency if evident Laos was on verge of collapse although for considerations of domestic and international politics, they feel obliged to cloak such action in language which would, if public statement necessary, permit them to face parliamentary and Soviet criticism.

3. Regarding fears (Deptel 5122) as to possibility that their new terms of reference would open door to haggling, it appears to me that when time came if UK were determined to haggle, which I do not think would be case, they could do so almost as easily under present terms as they could under those they are now proposing. I appreciate your strong views on this subject but I believe that it should not prove impossible for us to agree with British on some formulation which would both satisfy their problem and ours. As I believe British, in all honesty, can not accept present terms, I told MacDermot Washington reaction negative to their alternative but said it seemed to me we[5] might be able work out something which fitted both our needs. He readily agreed.

4. Meeting this afternoon dealt primarily with SEATO contingency planning and it was apparent, despite rather confused presentation of Foreign Office working level which apparently does not have its thinking entirely coordinated with Ministry of Defense on MPO 5C/59,[6] that textual modifications of plan will probably be presented by British and other Council representatives at Bangkok meeting which considers it.

5. In view paragraph 1 and information in Bangkok's 59 as to how Johnson–Australian representative plan to handle meeting, I think subject Department's views it would be better to go ahead rather than drop matter completely 18th. I told British I thought it important we try maintain some momentum particularly in view long delay.

Barbour

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[4] See footnote 3, *supra*.

[5] In telegram 3377 from London, January 7, the Embassy noted that "UK" should read "we." (Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–660)

[6] Dated November 27, 1959, this document embodies the changes made by the Military Advisers at the September 1959 meeting in Bangkok. (SEATO designator MS/147(a)/25/59; Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S–2–59)

55. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State[1]

London, January 8, 1960—11 a.m.

3398. From Parsons. In discussion re Laos and SEATO contingency planning seventh with Selwyn Lloyd, it developed that there has been progress. Lloyd said UK was prepared to act in Laos through SEATO to prevent country from falling to insurgency but thought it should be clear SEATO intervention would be considered only as last resort. Further, he stressed UK fears that Laotians might irresponsibly appeal for SEATO aid to get them out of purely domestic difficulties which their own actions in recent weeks had caused. If such an appeal were made, Lloyd said it was altogether likely that some SEATO members would not feel circumstances warranted SEATO action.

On positive side, however, he agreed that contingency planning could go ahead on informal basis and that language of plan itself should be what military considered acceptable. According Lloyd, plan should be "sound militarily but not unduly provocative." (MacDermot confirmed to me that this meant that earlier efforts of working level Foreign Office to cast language of plan in "defensive terms" were disapproved.)

I raised possibility that although he had not said his last word Nash would have objections to any agreement on the contingency planning. Lloyd implied that Nash could probably be brought around to any terms of reference which were mutually satisfactory to US and UK. He noted that Couve continued to oppose any SEATO planning for Laos. Lloyd stipulated that although UK would approve contingency planning, he wished to make it quite clear that UK would examine closely circumstances surrounding any appeal and UK did not feel obliged to respond automatically if SEATO invoked. He said UK was taking on no commitment inferentially or otherwise in approving plan and wished to avoid being accused of letting SEATO down if, when appeal came, UK could not agree to participate. UK did not wish, he replied, to give Laotians impression all they needed to do was invoke SEATO and step aside from their responsibilities. He concluded with thought that UK recognized need for maintaining threat to counter Communist aggression, but threat had to be carefully used. During conversation we reviewed steps taken to try and moderate Lao actions and I believe Lloyd feels that everything possible has been

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–860. Secret; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok, Vientiane, and Paris. A memorandum by Ballantyne of the conversation described in this telegram, which took place on January 7, is *ibid.*, 751J.00/1–760; included in the microfiche supplement.

done to prevent needless arising of situation which British would find inconsistent with purposes of SEATO contingency planning.[2]

Barbour

[2] According to a memorandum by Robert E. Barbour, Second Secretary of the Embassy in Paris, of a conversation held in Paris on January 8, Pierre Millet, Director of Asian and Oceanic Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, told Parsons that Couve de Murville "had agreed to accept the British 'compromise' proposal whereby the SEATO contingency plan (5B/59) could be completed on the basis of an 'informal understanding.' " (Department of State, Central Files, 379/1–860; included in the microfiche supplement)

56. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, February 17, 1960—3 p.m.

2322. (1) CR 16th finally agreed on formula (not to be recorded by CR) acceptable to New Zealand permitting MPO proceed wth Plan 5C. Formula proposed by UK and acquiesced in by me in interest of some forward movement on planning reads: "Although no decisions either formal or informal have been taken on identity appointed nation or nationality of commander, MPO is free to continue its planning on basis proposals which have been made." This devious verbiage satisfied New Zealand Representative, who insisted his tight instructions would compel him record non-concurrence in any formal or informal CR decision. He emphasized however New Zealand had no objection to proceeding in MPO under UK formula. All members accepted UK formula but Pakistan and Thai Representatives emphasized necessity to deal less equivocally with 5C.

I deplore necessity for such indirectness and have deep misgivings as to its effect on estimate tough-minded Thais such as Thanat will make of UK, NZ readiness to support 5C. Still I agree with view expressed by several members that CR action represents some progress.

(2) In discussion covering (a) through (g) of paragraph 5, Annex A of SCR/59/D–203[2] following points made:

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/2–1760. Top Secret. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Karachi, London, Paris, Canberra, Wellington, and Manila.

[2] Not found.

(a) Subject Thai insistence on prior agreement on cost sharing, all endorsed Thailand as appointed nation.

(b) With exception Pakistan, Philippines and Australians who without instructions, U.S. recommendations on command structure approved. Probably only Pakistan has substantive point to make.

(c) MPO has sent draft proposal[3] on subject matter of agreement with RLG to Military Advisers for comment. On receipt it will be submitted to CR.

(d) I proposed that CR acting under instructions and on behalf of Council Members and governments would make contemplated situation assessments, national military authorities would be informed of CR decisions this regard by member governments.

(e) Though CR accepted in principle directive to SEATO force commander French proposed certain language modifications (additional to proposed amendment paragraph 9 re POLAD) which in fact for first time raise question of actual authority of appointed nation. French would substitute "transmit" for "issue" in paragraph 3 C of MS/147A/33/59[4] and other changes effect of which would be to reduce authority appointed nation vis-à-vis Council Ministers and substantially make appointed nation role that of "post office" between Council Ministers and SEATO force commander.

(f) Australian Representative noting distinction between common and national costs too vague suggested MPO break down costs into major categories for CR discussion as broad lines division between common or national. After such division all but Philippines and Australia and possibly NZ can now agree to applying SEATO budget formula to common costs. My suggestion for common fund was favorably received subject to agreement on cost sharing formula. Other representatives seeking instructions.

(g) I opposed Thailand-supported necessity of status of forces agreement. It was agreed action would be deferred pending receipt of further information from MPO on need for such agreement.

(3) In brief discussion nationality POLAD I proposed Australian. Australia said nationality POLAD should be evaluated in context of decisions as to command structure.

(4) Request Department's view on 2(d) and (e) including any further guidance with respect language concerning POLAD paragraph 9 directive to SEATO force commander.[5] With respect French amendments it my recommendation we oppose reducing status of appointed

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[3] Not found.

[4] "Summary of MPO Plan 5C/59," dated December 11, 1959. The sentence mentioned reads: "The Council has invited one of the Member Nations (the 'Appointed Nation') to be responsible on its behalf for the conduct of operations by the SEATO Force and to issue the Directive to the Commander, SEATO Force." (Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S–2–59)

[5] In Annex B to the document cited in footnote 4 above, entitled "Proposed Directive to the Commander, SEATO Force," paragraph 9 specified that although political direction would be furnished through the commander's own government, he would also be provided with a political adviser for liaison with the SEATO Council and the Council Representatives. In telegram 2201 to Bangkok, February 25, the Department of State approved Johnson's proposal concerning item 2(d), and implied that the role of the

Continued

nation to "post office" role. While broad political guidance must come from SEATO Council, neither Council nor Council Representatives able act quickly as well illustrated in present discussion 5C and appointed nation must have considerable measure of discretion and authority if its role is to be meaningful.

(5) Next CR meeting February 26.

Johnson

appointed nation should not be reduced to that of "post office." (Department of State, Central Files, 379/2–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

57. Memorandum of Discussion at the 436th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, March 10, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1–3.]

4. *U.S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia* (NSC 5809;[2] OCB Special Report on NSC 5809, dated February 10, 1960[3])

Mr. Harr summarized the reference Special Report on the subject by the Operations Coordinating Board. He said we had now come to realize that in Cambodia Sihanouk was a much more astute politician and had much greater control over the country than when our policy on Southeast Asia was written. The operators now feel that we must direct our policy toward getting along with Sihanouk, who has survived a number of attempts to unseat him. With respect to Laos, our problem used to be that of directing the country toward a pro-West orientation. Such orientation has now been accomplished. Laos seems to be firmly adhering to the West and to SEATO; it seems to have assumed an anti-Communist position. Laos had great confidence in the Western interest in SEATO, in the Western interest in defending Laos, and in the UN. Accordingly, Laos tends to think its fundamental problems are solved. Our task now is to prevent Laos from indulging in excesses which might provoke North Vietnamese intervention or alienate world sympathy. It is also necessary to try to provide more

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs on March 14.

[2] Document 12.

[3] Included in the microfiche supplement. (Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 480, SEA 4)

effective communication between the countryside and the capital city in Laos. For these reasons, the OCB had recommended that those parts of NSC 5809 dealing with Cambodia and Laos should be reviewed.

The National Security Council:[4]

a. Noted and discussed the reference Special Report on the subject by the Operations Coordinating Board.

b. Directed the NSC Planning Board to review NSC 5809, with particular reference to those parts which pertain to Cambodia and Laos.

Marion W. Boggs

[4] Paragraphs a and b constitute NSC Action No. 2193, approved by President Eisenhower on March 15. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

58. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, May 19, 1960.

SUBJECT

Military Preparedness in the Far East

The breakdown in the Summit talks,[2] insofar as it may bring a shift in Soviet tactics from alleged desire for a détente to greater bellicosity, would seem to enhance the likelihood of renewed Chinese Communist adventurism in the Far East.

The Chinese Communists have made it abundantly clear all along that Khrushchev's efforts, for whatever reasons, toward a relaxation of tensions were not in accord with their judgment as to the best means of furthering the world Communist revolution—i.e., in the light of the present stage of their own revolution. To the extent that Soviet restraints have been imposed on the Communist Chinese—and we believe such have been present—they may be removed or even replaced by sanctions of Chinese Communist probes in their area of influence, depending on how far the Soviets go toward reversing their détente policy. Such disturbances could, in fact, be used as rationale for a later

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 790.5/5–1960. Secret. Drafted by Alfred leS. Jenkins, Regional Planning Adviser in FE, and cleared in CA, NA, SEA, and SOV.

[2] Reference is to the summit meeting held in Paris May 16–17.

Summit meeting, even if all-out cold war is *not* resumed as a result of Khrushchev's recent attitude. Khrushchev for some time probably hoped that threats, bluster, and dramatic space achievements with military implications, combined with efforts (spurious or not) toward relaxation of tensions, might bring him closer to a Soviet solution of the Berlin problem which he doubtless finds increasingly embarrassing. After finding no evidence of Western willingness to retreat on this score as a result of his tactics he may well have concluded that his best recourse was to sabotage the Summit, adopt pressure tactics in vulnerable areas and thereby regain support both of the more Stalinist elements at home and of his Chinese partners. If so, the chances of "hot" wars (albeit initially small wars) in the Far East are probably greater than they have been for some time.

There are several areas in the Far East which would be tempting to the Communists for probing actions if failure to progress with respect to Berlin causes them to turn to the East. The most obvious of these is the Taiwan Strait, where "war every other day" is already going on in a desultory fashion. The Chinese Communists have refused to renounce the use of force in their attempts to solve the "domestic" problem of Taiwan, have increased artillery fire power in the Strait area by some 25% over their 1958 capability, have increased the number of air fields within fighter range of Taiwan to 13, have an unknown number of MIG–19s in Southeast China, have completed their ground-control intercept (GCI) net, and have given evidence of appreciably better pilot performance than that exhibited during the former Strait crisis.

Pathet Lao insurgent activity in Laos continues on a reduced scale, but the potential is present for markedly increased activity wth DRV assistance. The nature of the terrain, the problem of disloyal minorities (with several ethnic strains on both sides of the border), the weaknesses of the young Lao Government and the difficulty of proving outside Communist aid to the insurgents across the ill-defined jungle border, make Laos perhaps the most promising of all Far Eastern targets to the Communists.

Viet Cong terrorism in South Viet-Nam has been gradually increasing for some months, with no very promising solution yet in sight. This situation has somewhat eroded the prestige of Diem's government. Meanwhile, DRV regular forces twice the size of the GVN's are poised across the demilitarized zone.

The recent upheaval in the ROK has so far not lent itself to Communist exploitation, but until a new, strong government fully responsive to the people emerges, the Communists will be especially watchful for opportunities to turn popular dissatisfactions to their purposes.

Even before the Summit collapse FE was deeply concerned at the prospect of a possible drastic cut by the House Appropriations Committee in the requested Military Assistance appropriation for 1961. Recent studies have tended to indicate that with increasing Chinese Communist military power we might well be unable to turn back a determined Communist thrust in any of the above threatened areas short of the use of nuclear weapons, which we believe would bring virtually prohibitive political costs. Furthermore, at least in Laos the use of nuclear weapons would appear to be unprofitable in any event, and we could be faced with the necessity of striking elsewhere in order to relieve the pressure on Laos if it were persistent and great.

Particularly disquieting is the possibility of our having to fight on more than one front in the Far East. The Sino-Soviet side, with its continent-based military might, has the capability of presenting us with the need to fight more than one "small war" at a time. Even with the use of nuclear weapons our relative capability, considering the size and nature of our forces, our relatively more vulnerable positions, and the near-critical aging of most of our ships, is getting to the point where the need to fight on more than one front at a time would seriously embarrass us both from the standpoint of transport and of total military force available to the area without drawing from NATO or other commitments.

In effect, we are perforce at present counting on the ability of indigenous forces to hold an initial attack until UN and/or other mechanisms can "put the lid back on" before the maneuverability and adequacy of our own forces are tested in larger, multi-frontal conflict. If now, through appropriation cuts, we should be faced with the choice between modest modernization of indigenous forces, with concomitant sizeable cut-back in force levels, or maintenance of present force levels without modernization, we are in the present Far Eastern climate inviting risks which could imperil our position in the Western Pacific. Indeed, in view of continued Chinese Communist build-up of military power there begins already to be some question whether our basic security policies and NSC directives with respect to the Far East are fully realistic in terms of our ability, and that of our Asian allies, to back them up. Further cuts in MAP would almost certainly require a new appraisal of our broad commitments in the area.

There are, of course, arguments to support the thesis that trouble in Asia is not any more likely now than before. The Communists are doubtless aware that events at the Summit have prompted a higher degree of Western solidarity than has obtained for some time, and that this would probably be reflected in more ready support of Western efforts against Communist expansionist efforts in Asia. Too, if the "danger" to Peiping of a détente has passed for now, the regime may not feel the same compulsion to cause trouble in the Far East with a

view to sabotaging détente efforts. Moreover, in the last few months, although not entirely successful, Peiping has made efforts to improve its image among non-Communist Asian countries. To this end it has signed border agreements with Burma and Nepal, and sent Chou En-lai to New Delhi to negotiate with Nehru despite earlier Peiping insistence that the meeting take place at a "neutral" capital. While these negotiations ended in failure, Chinese Communist propaganda did its best to cover up the fact. Furthermore, Chou's most recent sortie to Cambodia is believed to have produced appreciably favorable results for Communist China's prestige and influence. Peiping may hesitate to reverse this policy abruptly with bellicose moves of the type which caused widespread reaction against it in 1959. Finally, US policy on the Far East has shown no signs of weakening and this policy has been the major deterrent to Chinese Communist use of force against its vulnerable neighbors.

The fact we have not yet indicated any flagging of our determination in the area, and the resulting confidence and trust this has produced in Free Asia, is in itself the strongest argument for our being prepared for the worst—for by so doing can we best avoid the worst. Certainly if any people can "afford" the demands of preparedness, we can.

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59. Position Paper Prepared in the Department of State[1]

SCW D–4/11 *Washington, May 26, 1960.*

MPO PLAN (5/C) TO COUNTER COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN LAOS

(To be used only if question raised at initiative of other Council Members)

Expected position of other SEATO members:

New Zealand, because of Prime Minister Nash's strong personal views, is adamantly opposed to any political decisions being taken on Military Planning Office Plan 5/C, which is a military contingency plan for countering Communist insurgency in Laos. The MPO referred

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559, CF 1689. Top Secret. Drafted by Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr., Special Assistant for SEATO Affairs in FE. Cleared in the Department of Defense, FE, and C. Prepared for the Sixth Meeting of the SEATO Council, held in Washington May 31–June 3.

the plan to the Council Representatives for decision on certain matters requiring governmental level decisions. With the exception of New Zealand, all other Council Representatives have informally agreed on replies to most of the questions and the MPO is proceeding on the assumption that those replies would, if necessary to implement the plan, be affirmed by the Council. New Zealand's objections extend to approval of the plan itself, naming an "appointed nation", and agreeing on a command structure. While Mr. Nash has been willing to acquiesce in allowing the Military Planning Office to work out the wholly military details, he adamantly refuses to agree to any decisions in the Council Representatives. The U.K. would like to complete the plan, but is dubious about taking further political steps primarily because it does not wish to force Nash into a corner, but also out of distrust of Thailand, with its special interests in Laos, as "appointed nation", and fear of Thai security leaks. The French are somewhat distrustful of Thailand for the same reasons. Australia, though it would like to complete the plan, does not want to collide head-on with Nash, and plans, together with the U.K., to approach Nash before the meeting with the proposal that Plan 5/C not be discussed at the Council meeting. Pakistan would like to make the remaining political decisions, as would the Philippines. Thailand would like to see the plan completed, but is not prepared to accept its role as "appointed nation" before a cost-sharing formula is agreed upon.

U.S. position:

Apart from Prime Minister Nash's general position, recent political developments in Laos, which have increased the influence of Thai Prime Minister Sarit's nephew, General Phoumi, in Laos, have led New Zealand, the United Kingdom and France to question the desirability of having Thailand as the appointed nation. Since the introduction of the topic may thus lead to an exchange of recriminations and expose these suspicions, we prefer that the topic not be discussed at the meeting, but if it is raised by Mr. Nash we believe the issue of whether the SEATO organization is to engage in meaningful military contingency planning must be squarely faced.

It is therefore recommended that any discussion of Plan 5/C be referred to the Military Planning Office, which is currently seized with the problem. Should it be necessary nonetheless to deal with the question, it is recommended that you stress that (a) effective planning is necessary as long as there is a possibility that military intervention might be required in Laos, (b) the knowledge that planning is going on has a healthy deterrent effect on potential aggressors, and (c) possible leaks, though deplorable, must not be allowed to stand in the way of planning.

60. Memorandum of a Conversation, White House, Washington, June 1, 1960, 9:45 a.m.[1]

USDel/MC/20

SUBJECT

Conversation Between the President and Prime Minister Nash of New Zealand

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Prime Minister Nash
G. D. L. White, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of New Zealand
J. Graham Parsons, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs

After amenities Mr. Nash remarked that with reference to the recent unfortunate U–2 incident he had been much impressed by the openness shown by the United States Government. He thought that this frankness had been a good show. The President indicated that our government system with its divided power leads to such openness and that he had often discussed with the late Mr. Dulles the advantages and disadvantages of this. Turning to the abortive Summit Conference, the President said that the interesting thing was why did Khrushchev decide to demolish the Conference. He had known about the U–2 for two years or so and he had proved this by even giving the date of a flight previous to the recent one which failed. One could not, of course, know what Khrushchev's reasons were but there were various possibilities. The President mentioned some of these such as dissatisfaction from Stalinist, Soviet military and also Chinese Communist sources. He described the events in Paris surrounding President de Gaulle's written invitation to Khrushchev to come back to another meeting and Khrushchev's failure to reply or appear. It was obvious too, the President pointed out, that Khrushchev had come to Paris with the intention of scuttling the Conference and he described the long documentation with translations already provided which Khrushchev had used soon after his opening mild statements on arrival. There was mention that Mr. Khrushchev badly misjudged American psychology as was evident from his apparent effort to intervene in our forthcoming elections.

Mr. Nash dilated at some length on his own visit to Moscow[2] and gave every evidence of having been impressed with Mr. Khrushchev. Mr. Nash thought that he sincerely wanted disarmament and commented that he had been able to tell Khrushchev that on the basis of recent personal contacts he could assure him that two of the other

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/6–160. Secret. Drafted by Parsons. A typed note reads: "Approved in White House 6/21/60."

[2] Prime Minister Nash visited the Soviet Union April 18–24 during a European tour.

three world leaders also sincerely wanted disarmament, which was the biggest issue of our day. He went on to say that Mr. Khrushchev seemed thwarted by the negotiations in Geneva whether in the test ban conference or the group of ten. He was in fact obsessed by intervention in Russian affairs and talked at length about those who had intervened after the first World War. When Mr. Nash added that he had had a grandfather at the Crimean War, Mr. Khrushchev pointed at him and said that he, Mr. Nash, was an interventionist also. Returning to the subject of overflights, he commented favorably on the cessation of these flights. The President indicated that he had already decided this before going to Paris and it was therefore simple to so inform Khrushchev. He commented however, that one could not possibly prevent Chiang Kai-shek from making flights over the area immediately adjacent to Taiwan. In further reference to Khrushchev and his intemperate personal attacks, the President remarked that he himself in his political life had always been careful not to impugn the motives of others.

During discussion of China, Mr. Nash spoke with disfavor of the Soong family and others who had surrounded Chiang Kai-shek in the old days. He quite evidently did not regard the present situation on Formosa with much favor, mentioning his concern for the Formosan people and also his view that the future of Formosa should be guaranteed by some means or other, perhaps by the United Nations. He also expressed the view that the offshore islands belonged to "China" (not Formosa) and that this situation should be dealt with lest there be more bad trouble.

With respect to Communist China, Mr. Nash made clear that he felt the present situation was unfortunate and that it would be best to come to some means of dealing with this nation which controlled a vast population, as otherwise there might be even worse trouble later. The President made it emphatically clear that under present circumstances the United States would not recognize Communist China and that if its government gained admittance to the United Nations he feared that the public reaction in the United States would be so strong as to possibly destroy the United Nations. Mr. Nash responded that if that were the case with respect to public opinion here, it might be best to start trying to change that opinion. The President said that public opinion here could only change when it had facts to go on. The facts were, however, that the Communist Chinese were continuing to imprison our people and failing to give an accounting for many of those who had disappeared after the Korean war. They had also refused to renounce force and all the while were carrying on a vigorous hate campaign against us.

Turning to Laos and Vietnam, Mr. Nash expressed concern at the way elections had been rigged in these two countries and he said he did not know what could be done about such situations. He indicated that New Zealand wished to take a constructive and cooperative position, but it was obvious that he was dissatisfied with the handling of affairs in these two countries and felt that this boded no good for the future.

During additional discussion of European matters, Mr. Nash expressed the view that Khrushchev and the Communists were opposed to a plebiscite in Germany because he knew that such a plebiscite could not possibly be won. There would have to be three plebiscites in the two Germanys and Berlin for a fair test. The President indicated that the free world side was perfectly willing to have one plebiscite or three plebiscites, or any other proper voting procedure. Mr. Nash remarked that in his opinion Mr. Khrushchev had a really first-class political mind, a view from which the President dissented somewhat by saying that in his observation he struck him as more of a shrewd, quick and tough debater.

At the close of the conversation the President spoke with emphasis on the sincerity and strength of the desire of the American people for peace, disarmament and a proper relaxation of tensions. He added that despite the disappointment of the Paris collapse he was not pessimistic about the future. It was notable that unity between the French, the British and ourselves had never been more complete.

61. Telegram From the Department of State to the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting[1]

Washington, June 1, 1960—12:31 a.m.

3034. SEATO Ministerial Council. Paris Topol deliver Burgess 8:00 a.m. First SEATO closed session afternoon May 31[2] devoted to exchange views on matters affecting Treaty area. Summary follows:

Australia. Menzies spoke of common danger to SEATO members especially as represented by aggressive Chicoms growing in economic and military strength. Doubted Chicoms as sensitive to nuclear deterrent as Soviets. Believed Communist China may consider its population more expendable than do others. Said Australia had no desire become member of nuclear club but wished to contribute in any way possible to common effort in resisting outward thrust of communist aggression. Stressed importance of creating social and spiritual cohesion in Southeast Asia and paid tribute to Thanat Khoman particularly for his efforts in developing more of sense of community among free Southeast Asian nations. Said independence did not lead automatically to democracy. Believed more than one recently independent country must pass through phase of less than full democracy but all must seek ultimately self-government sufficiently broadly based to insure continuity in reaching desired goals of the people. While SEATO members have varying forms of government all share two concepts: (a) equal justice before the law and (b) respect for integrity of public administration. Stressed need for SEATO to keep before it at all times human objectives it seeks to serve, for main battles of future will be in realm of human mind and spirit.

Thailand. Thanat Khoman said recent Chicom pressures had bewildered those seeking accommodation with communists through "peaceful co-existence." In Laos alertness and stern warnings on part SEATO and UN presence had prevented Pathet Lao insurrection directed by DRV and abetted by Chicoms from developing into full scale civil war with communist intervention. Recent events, especially

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559, CF 1688. Secret. Drafted by Jenkins and marked for clearance by Johnson and Parsons and approval by Theodore C. Achilles. Also sent to Ankara, Canberra, Karachi, London, Manila, Wellington, CINCPAC for POLAD, and priority to Paris Topol. Pouched to Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Vientiane. Transcripts of this and other sessions of the Sixth Meeting of the SEATO Council are *ibid.*, CF 1687.

[2] A report on the opening public session held the morning of May 31 is in telegram 3033 to Bangkok, May 31. (*Ibid.*, CF 1688; included in the microfiche supplement) For text of Vice President Nixon's welcoming address, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 20, 1960, p. 983.

escape of NLHX prisoners, may cause renewed fighting. In South Viet-Nam terrorist activity markedly increased. Chicoms especially following Chou visit may find facilities in Cambodia for base of actions directed against Treaty area. Very possible communists have overall plan for Southeast Asia to be implemented in near future and SEATO may find its responsibilities increasingly heavy. Thailand attempting ameliorate its difficulties with Cambodia without involving SEATO. Spoke of close and efficient cooperation with Malaya on border problems and said similar cooperation may become necessary in border area with Burma. Believed Philippine and Malay efforts toward regional association should be developed but difficulties could not be concealed.

France. Couve said in Asia communist policies dominated by Chicoms and not Soviets. Chicoms since they are at beginning of their revolution and have tremendous economic difficulties must adopt policies of strength both at home and abroad. Exact relations between Soviets and Chicoms unclear but that there are differences in respective attitudes toward outside world evident from policies toward détente. Southeast Asia situation had in some respects deteriorated since last year. In Indonesia Sukarno's dictatorship has been strengthened by help of army without lessening strength of communist party. Laos has by no means solved problem of subversion. Recent Lao elections results "too good". SEATO members must not lower guard but must try to help stabilize Lao situation and if possible improve it with help of UN. Viet-Nam faces task of balancing authority and liberalism, former to fight subversion and latter to gain maximum support from people. Expressed concern about Cambodia where accurate analysis not easy. Cambodia believes it is endangered by its neighbors and its acts are greatly influenced by that belief. Much evidence Cambodian authorities still distrust communists but difficult to reconcile this with closer relations recently formed with communist bloc, concerning which we should be deeply concerned. Statements by Chou on his recent visit to Cambodia would seem, while not constituting formal guarantee, in effect to have committed Communist China to defense Cambodian borders.

Philippines. Serrano[3] reviewing recent events Laos stressed importance bringing countryside under government control. Believed UN presence and multi-national economic aid would help. Spoke of Indonesian and Vietnamese situations in familiar terms emphasizing communists' objective in latter was discrediting of Diem Government. Spoke of importance to Treaty area of Indian-Chicom difficulties, saying if Nehru should retreat from his present hard line this would give green light to communist expansion not only against India but else-

[3] Felixberto M. Serrano, Philippine Minister of Foreign Affairs.

where in area. Philippines share concern expressed by others at growing economic and political power of Chicoms. Adequate preparedness is only answer and SEATO Asian nations need modern weapons of greater striking power. Said economic aid extended by advanced members of SEATO regrettably too meager to be of much value. Saw no desire on part of advanced members to expand such aid. Emphasized if peoples of Southeast Asia were to regard freedom worth dying for, SEATO must make it worth living for. Colombo Plan and ECAFE not effective substitutes and bilateral assistance not full answer. SEATO must play constructive economic role and Philippines will later set forth suggestions in this regard. Advocated support for informal association Southeast Asian states and applauded Thai and Malay efforts this direction.

New Zealand. Nash said several recent evidences of less than democratic procedures in several free world countries gave food for thought. In today's world every major event affects Treaty area. Expressed regret at failure of Summit. Convinced all world leaders and their peoples desire peace. Believed on basis recent long talk with Khrushchev he is sincere in desire for relaxation of tensions. Communist China with its unlimited manpower reserves is formidable power and within next few years will have nuclear weapons. Essential Communist China be brought into agreement on disarmament. We should study more carefully our policies toward Chicoms, for longer we delay in this, greater is price we must pay. Nash said sooner or later Communist China must be recognized and seated in UN. Ostracism of Chicoms makes them arrogant, suspicious and aggressive, and leaves their distorted views uncorrected. Cannot indefinitely ignore 600 million Chinese. However Chicoms are insensitive to world and Asian opinion. Sanctions of world opinion need to be more effectively applied. We cannot base our policies on assumption of downfall of Chicom regime. Nash said race relations constituted most difficult problem today. Expressed conviction there are no superior people anywhere, only varying opportunity for development. Saw reasonable hope for stability and development in Burma. Considered Indonesia thinking too much in past and seeking external diversions instead of facing internal problems. Re West Irian believed self-government was ultimate solution and saw no reason why territory should pass from Dutch to Indonesian colonial rule. Complimented Singapore and Malaya for enlightened approach to racial problems. In Viet-Nam Diem had first done magnificent job but since 1957 situation steadily deteriorated. Great question is how we can help those we want to help when they rig elections to hold power. Expressed uneasiness re Cambodia in familiar terms. Re Laos, said communists outside Laos had doubtless assisted Pathet Lao, but we had given assistance to other (Government) side, which was at least comparable. Military prepara-

tion needed by free nations but in long run political, economic and social efforts provide most effective defense. We all united in objectives but methods may differ. New Zealand will speak out plainly but fully supports SEATO which helps keep peace.

Exchange of views continues tomorrow with Pakistan, UK and US speaking.

For Paris Topol: Above may be used in your discretion at NAC.

Herter

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62. Circular Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions[1]

Washington, June 1, 1960—10:35 p.m.

1507. Paris for Emb and USRO. SEATO Ministerial Council. At second closed session morning June 1 exchange views on matters affecting Treaty area continued with speeches by Pakistan, UK and US summarized below under I. Heads of all delegations commented on Military Advisers' Report[2] which was duly noted (summary under II).

I

Pakistan

Qadir[3] underlined need eliminate differences and disputes within Free World which Communists endeavoring exploit, e.g. Pakistan's differences with India and Afghanistan. Communists have also shown their hand in Tibet, Northwest Frontier, Ladakh and Laos. Friendship proferred by Pakistan to India should be firmly grasped before it too late. China has real need for expansion which most likely to take place in Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, Pakistan and India. In recent negotiations with India Chou might have got what he

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[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559, CF 1688. Secret. Drafted by Daniel V. Anderson, cleared in FE and with Johnson, and marked for approval by Howard Jones. Sent to Ankara, Bangkok, Canberra, Karachi, London, Manila, Paris (also to USRO), Wellington, and CINCPAC for POLAD and pouched to Phnom Penh, Saigon, and Vientiane.

[2] This report to the SEATO Council forms Annex H to the Report of the Twelfth Military Advisers Conference. (Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S–3–60; included in the microfiche supplement) The Military Advisers' meeting was held in Washington May 25–27.

[3] Manzur Qadir, Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.

wanted, viz. time to consolidate position along India's northern border. Commenting on statements yesterday by PriMin Nash, Minister said intentions of USSR do not look as innocent as Khrushchev had obviously succeeded in making Nash believe them to be. Soviet aspirations continue to include domination of areas giving access to Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.

United Kingdom

Selwyn Lloyd assured colleagues of UK's deep and continuing interest in Southeast Asia where there is prospect of steady deterioration. In Singapore UK had taken calculated risk in giving internal self-government. Present government is strong, left-wing but non-Communist and seeking to develop loyalty to Singapore not to China. However it beset by grave economic problems, unemployment and increase of population. UK feels cautiously optimistic. In Malaya situation is very satisfactory and in Burma satisfactory. With largest Communist party in SEA Indonesia is steadily deteriorating internally. President does not have obvious successor and his popularity has fallen as he tries to maintain balance between Army and Communist Party. UK has always supported Dutch juridically and has tried to bring about negotiated settlement of New Guinea dispute which must be settled peaceably. Only possible policy is to work with present government of Indonesia to try to keep it independent, neutral and aware of folly of armed attack on New Guinea. In Indochina situation is worsening and in Viet-Nam there is deterioration with insurgency likely to be stepped up but stopping short of overt aggression. Answer lies largely in determination and wisdom of GVN which with generous US aid and sufficient determination should be able to survive. One difficulty is balancing anti-Communist measures so as not to alienate non-Communist opinion. In Laos influence of DRV is being strengthened and RLG needs support. SEATO must be prepared to act in certain circumstances. UN presence one of most constructive ways of helping RLG and halting Communist influence. Important that RLG pursue moderate policies, not abandon neutrality and consult friendly governments. In Cambodia there would be quick improvement if relations with neighbors could be bettered. Despite failure of Summit general policy must be to try for relaxation of tension. China is not only in grip of Communism but there great deal of Nationalism. China will pursue truculent probing policy. It wishful thinking to imagine gap between USSR and China but interesting to note Soviets' stepped up interest in SEA as evidenced by USSR's attempts to impress Asians with Soviet superiority. As for propaganda offensives, there is question whether free world is acting effectively. Communists have given impression their aid to underdeveloped countries equivalent to free world's while in fact actual delivered aid has been less than provided

by UK alone. By such propaganda and by counting trade as aid Communists have been getting away with monstrous distortion of truth. They have also fostered impression they are only ones believing in disarmament. They must be convinced they will not get away with verbal pledges and uncontrolled promises. Re Mr. Nash's remarks, we must remember many countries do not recognize Peiping which by actions in Tibet and India has not made it easy for governments to change nonrecognition policy. If agreement on nuclear tests is reached negotiations with China should take place. If there is world conference on disarmament China and West Germany must be represented. If we have general disarmament there must be a world authority with China included to keep peace.

United States

Secretary praised opening remarks of PriMin Menzies and emphasized utmost importance of fostering community spirit throughout SEA. Secretary then gave chronological review Summit Conference from which he reached certain tentative conclusions. Khrushchev's demands represented fixed Soviet position from which he could not have had authority to depart while in Paris. There indications Khrushchev had concluded there little likelihood of having his way particularly in regard to Berlin and also that his conduct of foreign policy including visits to US and France was being questioned if not opposed within Soviet hierarchy. Also logical that some opposition raised by Chinese Communists found sympathetic response in Moscow probably among military. Khrushchev's post-Summit behavior interesting for despite violent invectives there was no threat of particular actions and planned mass meeting in East Berlin was cancelled with Russian unilateral action toward East Germany postponed. While indications Khrushchev does not plan any rash action for time being we must keep our guard up. In China, there is no doubt failure of Summit was cheered. Since Chinese Communists had opposed Khrushchev's line of personal relationships and peaceful coexistence it now likely there will be further probing actions particularly in Far East and possibly in Middle East. As for PriMin Nash's statements that we have ignored the ChiComs the fact is we have had considerable negotiating experience with them at Korea and Indochina Conference and at Ambassadorial talks. In 97 Ambassadorial sessions no progress whatsoever has been made. In dealing with disarmament and nuclear test ban US has always envisaged discussions in Geneva would inevitably have to lead to inclusion of other nations including Communist China. But Chinese have made it quite clear that recognition of Communist China would require complete abandonment of Government in Taiwan as prerequisite to acceptance of membership in UN. ChiComs' policy is to neutralize Japan, evict US from Pacific and to

continue probing. Adherence to UN Charter involves acceptance of Charter's principles. Communist China is still an outlaw before UN and still an aggressor. If ChiComs were recognized should Outer Mongolia, North Viet-Nam and North Korea be treated equally? What would be effect on overseas Chinese? Views of UK might be heard in restricted session tomorrow re what advantages have been gained by recognition of China.

II. Comments on Military Advisers' Report

Thailand. Plans appear adequate but new developments elsewhere may necessitate revisions lest SEATO be caught unprepared. Exercises have been successful but there danger of relaxing and leaving initiative to enemies. In view deteriorating situation in area vigilance necessary. Given limited communications and transport facilities SEATO telecommunications network should be set up soonest and direct circuit Bangkok–Singapore established.

New Zealand. Military Planning Office has made good progress. Exercises have continued to be successful and provide visible earnest of concern for defense of area. Military Advisers do not determine policy but must plan to give effect to what Council desires. Work of planners very much appreciated. (Minister indicated he would seek certain further information in restricted session tomorrow.)

Pakistan. Good progress made in military planning. Exchange of confidential information with CENTO satisfying. It logical that there be closest possible cooperation and integration of plans between NATO, CENTO and SEATO.

United Kingdom. Planning especially important this year; program for coming year will be taxing. Difficult delicate work last year handled with great competence. Various SEATO organs are becoming increasingly interdependent. Threat assessments should be reviewed more frequently and there is need for military to work closely with Council Reps on many matters. Publicity given exercises must be looked at from political point of view; arrangements being made for consultations between Military Advisers and Council Reps welcome. Joint exercises demonstrate SEATO allies working together and are visible deterrents. However sense of balance needed lest they inflame delicate situations. Objective is to gain maximum defensive advantage and give opponents minimum propaganda advantages.

France. As planning based on many assumptions and unknown factors it must be flexible but specific enough to be realistic. MPO should have enough authority to function smoothly as study group rather than general staff, which has to take account views of eight nations.

Australia. Military planning has both intrinsic value necessary to reality of SEATO and extrinsic value in that planning and exercises have impact on others including some neutralists who may gain comfort from this work. Re publicity, difficult to know how far to go and when to stop. Happy balance must be struck. This work well enough known so that more publicity can be directed to economic and cultural fields.

Philippines. If military plans have to be implemented Philippines will do its allotted share and count hopefully on other members wherever it is deficient.

United States. Progress recorded by Military Advisers gratifying and those taking part in exercises complimented. Secretary General asked to record unanimous commendation of work of General Thornton and welcome to new officers. Re previous remarks on public relations, it gratifying to note close relationship between Military Advisers and Council as to degree of publicity to apply in specific exercises—a matter to be determined by joint action with political considerations receiving predominant consideration. [4]

For Paris Topol: Above may be used in your discretion at NAC.

Herter

[4] A third closed session of the SEATO Council, held the afternoon of June 1, dealt with budgetary matters and technical, economic, and cultural programs. A summary is in circular telegram 1506, June 1. (Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559, CF 1688; included in the microfiche supplement)

63. Circular Airgram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Missions [1]

CA–10436 *Washington, June 14, 1960.*

At 2½ hour restricted session (principals and two advisers only) morning June 2 there was extensive and spirited discussion of New Zealand position on recognition Communist China with all other delegates, especially Philippines, Australia and Thailand attacking Nash and in varying degrees supporting U.S. position. There was also discussion initiated by Nash of military planning, considerable discussion

[1] Source: Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 64 D 559, CF 1688. Secret; Seato; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Johnson and marked for approval by the Secretary. Sent to Bangkok, Canberra, Djakarta, Karachi, London, Manila, Paris (also for USRO), Phnom Penh, Saigon, Taipei, Vientiane, Wellington, and CINCPAC.

of Indonesia and some of Laos and Cambodia. Thai also bitterly attacked Nash's remarks at plenary on dictatorships. It was firmly agreed no information concerning restricted session would be given to press, not even subjects of discussion.

Nash opened meeting by statement on military planning to effect New Zealand does not oppose military planning but it should be strictly military without political commitments or political decisions and completely secret. Political decisions can be made only when situation arises which may require implementation of plan. There can be no automatic commitment to take action. Planning should stop short of entering into negotiations with other agencies such as making arrangements with oil companies for fuel supplies. This was particularly important in the present situation in Laos where other side may misinterpret SEATO purposes in engaging in military planning. It is important that "lead not be given to Viet Minh". Careful attention should be given not to involve SEATO in arguments between groups within a country simply on the basis of government allegations opposition is Communist. SEATO should not set out to back government regardless of its quality. Election campaigns in Laos and Viet-Nam both very disturbing and possible both countries might be running into "South Korean type difficulties". Nash very pleased intervention of Hammarskjold into Laos and agreed what was required there was not arms but rather the establishment of decent living standards.

Secretary replied did not feel there was any serious substantive disagreement Nash on subject military plan as obviously military planning could be only carried point that political decisions required. However, planning immensely important and valuable and must be engaged in by all nations and all alliances. Agreed that we could not reach pre-judgments on whether any particular situation involved external aggression or internal subversion as opposed to simple disagreements between parties within country. The U.S. never anticipated that advance political decisions could be taken on implementation of plan. It appeared that as of this moment Laos had achieved degree of stability but it would be wrong to judge elections all over the world by the standards of countries advanced in democratic processes.

Serrano, with obvious reference to Nash's statements in plenary, deplored that statements made on SEATO record supporting Chicoms as Chicoms would take much comfort from knowing that their case had been advocated even within SEATO which dedicated to frustrating Chicom designs. Philippines stoutly supported policy non-admission Chicoms in UN and non-recognition not only because Chicoms still international outlaw but for solid reason of Philippines' own national interest. If Chicoms recognized Chinese minority Philippines which very influential in industrial and commercial life would switch allegiance to Chicoms with most serious effect on Philippine security.

Philippines also saw no material benefits to recognition and even though might be able to obtain some goods from Chicoms at cheaper prices Philippines preferred paying a little higher price to obtain from free world. Chicoms would undoubtedly make attractive market for Philippine strategic goods which would flow to China rather than free world. Also in present state maturity Philippine people, recognition would endanger internal stability of Philippines. This not question of political science but matter of national survival and national existence. Serrano suggested discussion Chicoms be deleted from record of plenary sessions.

With respect to Indonesia Serrano said Philippines doing best to improve relations and asked what SEATO members individually could do to influence three principal factors in Indonesian equation—Sukarno, Army, and West Irian. Although Sukarno still has upper hand his strength is diminishing and while emergence of army rule would be improvement it was not answer to situation. Philippines feared for future of Indonesia. West Irian was banner under which all Indonesians would rally and Serrano feared that Soviets would capture and capitalize on this movement which could have decisive influence on Indonesian attitudes. Of course, SEATO as such should not take any position, it rather question for individual countries. Referring to recent $150 million Soviet loan to Indonesia Serrano said it his impression that U.S. aid was of "experimental probing type" while Soviets were making more massive attack in aid field which might tend switch Sukarno more towards Soviets.

Menzies agreed Serrano observations on internal Indonesian conditions and said that during his visit last December Sukarno seemed entirely uninterested in true problems of country. While some Ministers seemed very concerned great tragedy was that Hatta[2] most able in economic field was in semi-retirement. Said Australia on good terms with Indonesia except for New Guinea. It Menzies' understanding that Indonesian claim to New Guinea not based on juristic grounds and Indonesia had refused Netherlands' suggestion refer matter to World Court. However, Sukarno had at time Menzies' visit categorically asserted that force would not be used in West New Guinea matter and Australia hoped no military assistance would serve support Indonesia in act of aggression against New Guinea where Netherlands' sovereignty not seriously challenged even by Indonesia.

With respect to Chinese Communists Menzies endorsed Serrano's statement and said while problem could be approached from legal point of view, the real question was political rather than legal. It was plain that no argument with Chicoms was going to be settled unless Taiwan was handed over to Chicoms, who had made it categorically

[2] Dr. Mohammed Hatta, Vice President of Indonesia, 1950–1956.

clear that they rejected the two Chinas concept, and that their admission to UN inevitably involved exclusion of the GRC. This would represent superb diplomatic triumph for Chicoms. SEATO's reason for existence is prevent relatively small nations being grabbed up by Chicoms and if SEATO countries took course of action which made Taiwan a pawn and handed it over to Chicoms, what becomes of SEATO? For SEATO it would be "ecstasy of suicide". If legal claim of Chicoms to Taiwan was recognized Chicom attack on Taiwan could not be considered aggression. Therefore entire question "should be put back into refrigerator, not to be preserved but rather to be frozen under". This was no time to seek a change of policy.

With respect to military planning Australia expected planners to prepare plans on alternative assumptions. Not least probable form of aggression in Treaty Area would be internal subversion. There might be merely internal contending parties or internal strife might be "deadly manifestation of Communist tactic." It would be a calamity if plans including logistics not made and instantly available. Australia was not embarrassed by outside knowledge planning was going on.

Couve de Murville said he did not consider question recognition Communist China was matter for discussion now as realistically "no change could be expected in the near future". He questioned Serrano's implication that SEATO countries should support Indonesian claims West New Guinea so as to preclude Communist capture of this issue. He felt this dangerous game and there was not sufficient ground change in policy at present time. If this is done, what becomes of that portion of New Guinea not held by Dutch, Timor, etc. New Guinea is not really national question but rather a national slogan built up by Sukarno as diversion from domestic problems.

The Secretary commented that it seemed clear one common interest was to do all possible to assure that Indonesia did not attempt to use force in West New Guinea and Couve de Murville urged that influence be exercised on Indonesia to maintain calm and take no action.

Under Secretary Dillon set forth philosophy of U.S. program in Indonesia pointing out it was one of largest and most extensive technical assistance programs of USG and while it was not spectacular, but rather designed for long-range help, Indonesians seemed to like it and wanted to have it continued. Our military program was deliberate looking to the future along the lines set forth by Serrano, we seeing in army only possible stabilizing force in the country. Our earlier military aid program to Indonesia, which involved training for several hundred officers in the U.S., had paid big dividends and provided a wide area of intellectual support in army for its anti-Communist posture. He stated our present modest program of military aid primarily for army was limited to equipment that would not be helpful in any major

aggressive action and that was required by internal security considerations. It was very much appreciated by the Indonesian Army, and Indonesia had readily and repeatedly given assurances it would not be used for an attack on West New Guinea or for any other aggressive action. The remainder of our assistance was given primarily under the DLF and Exim Bank, there having been 5 or 6 relatively small projects in the field of airlines, ports, railroads, and a cement plant. The primary problem in Indonesia has been its slowness in developing projects and while its financial position is very poor, we have avoided getting into the morass of budgetary support. As far as Soviet projects are concerned the Indonesians had not yet planned projects even for use of $100 million previous Soviet offer and recent $250 million Soviet offer will be implemented only when specific projects are worked out. However, for the first time Indonesian Government now appears to be undertaking beginning steps in some economic planning. Mr. Dillon did not therefore feel it was quite correct to term our programs there as being just probing in character.

Selwyn Lloyd said he had little to add on what had been said on Indonesia, it being U.K. policy to keep the line open to Indonesian Government. The U.K. had sold some Navy aircraft in Indonesia and obtained assurances they would not be used in any attack against New Guinea.

With respect to Chicom representation Lloyd agreed perhaps that it had been a pity it was talked about at the plenary session yesterday. He did not feel that there had been any real difference of opinion between him and the Secretary at that session. Theoretically, Communist China should be in the UN but practical problem at present was only that at appropriate time Communist China be committed under any nuclear test agreement or disarmament agreement. Lloyd agreed that question of Chicom recognition and admission to UN is political and that it should be so handled as not to diminish the chance of survival of small countries on its periphery. With respect to military planning Lloyd agreed with Nash that governments should not be politically bound by such planning and it was necessary to have military approval of the assumptions on which that planning might be based. He cited Lebanon as instance in which massive outside support to what had been internal dispute required quick and effective intervention to save situation. He pointed out that it was no good making political judgments if there were no military plans to implement those judgments.

Thanat Khoman said that he had opportunity for many conversations, particularly with Subandrio, during his visit to Indonesia last March and he did not feel that Indonesia would constitute a threat to Southeast Asia. He did not feel the present leaders of Indonesia are showing proclivity for Communism and cited the measures taken

against Chinese minority. As to whether West New Guinea was a national slogan or a genuine national issue, all countries have such foibles. Indonesia showed great understanding of Thailand's position and had told Thanat that if they were in same geographical position as Thailand they would probably have done the same with respect SEATO, etc. However, they had said they "could afford" their policy because are separated by wide water barrier "from the main threat". Thanat said Indonesia undoubtedly has difficult internal situation and the PKI is strong. Major powers should give careful study to most suitable approach to the Indonesia question. Situation in Indonesia may well worsen but in any event will be heavily dependent on overall free world relations.

Thanat said he found it difficult to follow Nash's arguments on Chicom representation feeling it paradoxical on one hand to discuss Chicom subversion and infiltration and on other hand to advocate recognition. Thailand internal situation is more acute than that of Philippines, Chinese minority population being much larger. Question of recognition of Chicoms was considered very weighty by Thais. Also Thanat thought Chicoms did not particularly care whether they were recognized by Thailand or other small countries. The big point for Chicoms was whether they would be recognized by U.S. However, from standpoint of Thailand he saw no gain and only great trouble from recognition. The two million or more Chinese in Thailand would tend to shift their allegiance from Taiwan to the Chicoms. There was also question of families of overseas Chinese in Communist China. He was absolutely certain the moment that any country in Southeast Asia recognized Chicoms Chinese residents in that country will shift their allegiance to Chicoms.

With respect to military planning Thailand pointed out poverty of its resources if action to be taken in SEA. However, whatever Thailand has will be placed at the disposal of SEATO if and when danger threatens especially if it is in the area of Thailand.

Thanat then went on setting forth Thai position with respect Cambodia, saying some members may not know all facts. Thailand had established and maintained good relations with all its neighbors except for Cambodia. After Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations, Thailand tried to restore relations on a normal level and Thanat visited Cambodia for this purpose in his attempt to create a climate of stability and harmony. Thailand was successful for a short period of a few months but since that time matters have become worse and worse. Cambodia is engaging in heavy propaganda in radio and press attacks against Thailand playing the role of a victim of Thai imperialism. Fact is Thailand does not covet one inch of Cambodian territory. With respect to the issue of disputed temple, this had been brought before ICJ by Cambodia and Thailand had accepted this, hiring lawyers, and

taking steps to defend case in ICJ. It is evident that by playing the role of the victim Cambodia expects more sympathy, both material and psychological from both sides. He is sorry to say that this game seems to have succeeded to considerable extent. Thailand considered statements issued at time of recent Chou En-lai visit as very ominous and feared that Cambodia would be a base for further Communist operations against Thailand, even open attacks. Thailand sought the understanding of its friends and reiterated that threat of attack did not come from Thailand. Thailand particularly hoped that the press and "official circles" among its friends would understand Thai position.

Thanat then made bitter attack Nash's statements at plenary on dictatorial regimes in the area, while expressing appreciation for understanding shown by Menzies. Thanat said that while Thailand lacked number processes of representative government, Thailand has not forsaken democratic principles and respects rights of people including freedom of speech, worship, travel, etc., including the "pursuit of happiness". Thailand thought it better not to attempt at this time to have elections than to have them and cause turmoil in the country. It is Thailand's intention to prepare firm and solid ground for representative Government and remarks thrown out by "some" in plenary session had deeply hurt. If Thailand's presence SEATO group is objected to because of its form of government Foreign Minister would have no choice but to report back to his government so that it could consider whole situation.

Qadir stated that he had not interpreted Nash's remarks in exactly the same sense as Thanat but with respect to Nash's remarks on Chinese Communists he said that even though Pakistan had recognized Chinese Communists he wanted to ask what would happen to Formosa if Chicoms recognized by U.S. and admitted to UN. Was there any solution or any way out?

Nash responded at considerable length stating that he had never said Formosa should be handed automatically to Chinese Communists but should be totally demilitarized and neutralized and come under protection of international guarantees, possibly UN. It should be governed by its own inhabitants rather than by Chiang Kai-shek even though because of U.S. aid he understood GRC was doing good job. It would be necessary that Chicoms make concession on the position of Formosa if they are recognized. Nash then repeated at length and practically verbatim statement made in plenary with respect to Chicoms. Referring to the statements by Philippine and Thai representatives on Chinese minorities in their countries, he said that although New Zealand experience with Chinese was limited and the Chinese population in New Zealand is very small he was convinced that if the Southeast Asian countries recognized Communist Chinese it would make it easier for them to obtain loyalty of Chinese. The Chi-

nese in New Zealand had worked very hard and they fine citizens. While recognition cannot be given now it must be given sometime. Arguments are heard recognition cannot be given when there is a crisis, and then when things are quiet it is said that it is not necessary. It is important to think the matter through and be prepared to "move forward" at some appropriate time when things are quiet.

With respect to Governments in area Nash said that he honestly believed that Pakistan was better governed by Ayub and recognized that Pakistan had a long journey to go to reach democracy, 81 percent of the people being illiterate. With respect to Thailand, when he was there a few years ago he saw progress under plan of increasing number elected representatives to Parliament but "then someone came along and seized power". Important thing was that Governments be freely chosen by the people. Thought should be given to problem of governments which give no representation to those who differ from them and in this regard he thought particular attention should be paid to situation in Laos and Viet-Nam. He thought if elections in both those countries had been straight the Governments could still have won. However, the elections were not straight, problem now is what we should do. He did not intend to imply that Thailand should leave SEATO, perhaps it would be better if New Zealand would do so as it seems to be in minority of one.

Serrano then said that Nash's position on Formosa took too many things for granted. He failed to recognize that existence of Formosa depended on three elements: U.S. support, support of the overseas Chinese, and support of other free peoples. If Chicoms were recognized and attempt made to establish a dependent and neutral Formosa a chain reaction would set in that would inevitably result in national death of Formosa. It was impossible for him to conceive of a separate Formosa.

Menzies then said that he could not agree with Thanat's statement that Chicoms would attach no importance to recognition by small countries. He said nothing would suit Communists better than to isolate the U.S. on this policy so as to make issue appear as not one of freedom vs Communism but rather an issue of power politics between the U.S. and Communist world. If Communists succeeded in this it would be a disaster for all free world.

The Secretary heartily agreed Menzies' remarks and said that he understood that Nash also agreed that now was not appropriate moment to consider recognition of Communist China. It seemed to him that question was whether Chicoms were going to change or whether we were going to change. After all it was up to Chicoms to redress the situation they themselves had created. Just as in Berlin case, which was entirely manufactured by the Soviets, why was it up to us to find a solution to problem which Soviets themselves had deliberately cre-

ated. The logic that 600 million people could not forever be barred from representation in UN was irrefutable but it was clear that this was not the time and that we could not permit the Chicoms to crash their way into the United Nations.

The Secretary then referred to press reports that Soviet Union had made some disarmament proposals and speculated that the manner in which this was done indicated that the Soviets were attempting to move out of Geneva forum and to take disarmament into a new arena.

There was then considerable discussion of striking from the verbatim record of plenary statements made by various delegates on Communist China. During the course of discussion it was evident that several members of Council had not realized that a verbatim record had been kept of plenary. In reply to a query, Deputy Secretary-General said that 190 copies of record were distributed to the member governments under classification of "SEATO–Secret". It was consensus that no attempt should be made at this time to remove remarks on Communist China from the verbatim record of plenary but that Council Representatives should discuss handling of record of political discussions in future meetings. It was noted that no record of political discussion was kept in CENTO but that NATO maintained verbatim record. Possibility of having Secretariat make summary record of political discussions was discussed as was possibility of having all such discussion in restricted session.[3]

Dillon

[3] The Sixth Meeting of the SEATO Council concluded with a brief session on the afternoon of June 2. A summary is in circular telegram 1513, June 2. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement) For text of the communiqué, see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 20, 1960, p. 983.

A memorandum by Parsons of a conversation between the President and Prime Minister Menzies of Australia on June 3 reads in part: "Mr. Menzies said that this had been a good conference and he was pleased that Prime Minister Nash had not got by with some of his remarks about Formosa and about the need to deal with the Chinese Communists." (Department of State, Central Files, 379/6–360; included in the microfiche supplement) Another memorandum of the Eisenhower–Menzies conversation, by Colonel John S. D. Eisenhower, is in Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, DDE Dairies.

64. Memorandum of Discussion at the 452d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, July 21, 1960[1]

[Here follows a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting. Secretary Herter presided at the meeting.]

1. U.S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia (NSC 5809;[2] OCB Special Report on NSC 5809, dated February 10, 1960;[3] NSC Action No. 2193;[4] Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated July 11 and 18, 1960[5])

As background for Council consideration of the proposed changes in the policy on Southeast Asia, Mr. Dulles briefed the Council on the situation in Laos, Cambodia, North Vietnam and Burma, countries in which, Mr. Dulles said, developments particularly required attention. Turning first to Laos, Mr. Dulles stated that the Pathet-Lao was expanding its military and subversive capabilities and would be able to intensify its present low-level guerrilla effort at any time. It is presently quiescent but we believe that it is building up its assets. The new Laotian Government is concerned about the loyalty of the rural population and has inaugurated a political and social program which is the responsibility of teams from the 29,000-man Laotian Army. Six-man teams are sent to rural areas to teach the people sanitation and to spread government propaganda. There are other areas of Laos where governmental authority has to be established before such programs can be undertaken.

Mr. Dulles pointed out that the Laotian Army was being assisted through a joint U.S.-French program under an agreement concluded last September.[6] There has been significant progress toward the establishment of an efficient military organization. However, U.S. arrangements with the French will end on September 1 when the existing agreement lapses. The program will not be completed by that date. The new U.S. Ambassador to Laos, Ambassador Brown, was told in Paris on his way to Laos that De Gaulle in the last three months has taken a direct personal interest in Indo-Chinese affairs, including

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Robert H. Johnson.

[2] Document 12.

[3] Included in the microfiche supplement. (Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 480, SEA 4)

[4] See footnote 4, Document 57.

[5] The July 11 memorandum contains the proposed changes to NSC 5809 as prepared by the NSC Planning Board. (Department of State, S/P–NSC Files: Lot 62 D 1, NSC 5809 Series) In the July 18 memorandum, the JCS approved these changes. (*Ibid.*) The July 11 memorandum is included in the microfiche supplement.

[6] See Documents 230 and 231.

Laos.[7] As expected, he is taking a strong nationalistic line. The French would like to take over sole responsibility for the training of the Laotian Army partly for prestige reasons but also because they believe that there will be less Communist reaction to a French training mission. However, this does not accord with Laotian Government views. The Laotians want the French out and the U.S. in. The resolution of this problem may be the key to developments in Laos.

In Cambodia we continue to have to deal with Sihanouk who is a difficult character. He has threatened to accept Bloc military equipment unless the U.S. provides more and better equipment. Sihanouk says he needs additional means to defend himself against South Vietnam, Thailand, and, also, Laos. He suspects the U.S. of secret designs to "sink" Cambodia. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

The threat to accept Bloc military equipment is not all bluff. Cambodia could probably get such equipment for the asking. Communist China has promised it and the Cambodian Government has prepared contingency plans for arming itself with Bloc weapons. There is a possibility that the Cambodians will make a deal with Czechoslovakia. Cambodia may already have secret commitments to the Bloc. The British believe that a draft military agreement with Communist China was concluded during Chou En-lai's visit in May. Sihanouk views Communist China as the wave of the future and has sent his three sons there for their education. Sihanouk may want to frighten Vietnam and Thailand with intervention by the Bloc in an effort to get these countries to end their support of Cambodian dissidents. Thailand has been extending an olive branch; it has shelved its anti-Sihanouk campaign. Vietnam, however, is still planning anti-Sihanouk activities. Vietnam takes a tough attitude toward Sihanouk because the Vietnamese Communists are using Cambodia as a staging area for activities in Vietnam. Vietnam and Thailand are watching the U.S. reaction to the semi-ultimatum that Cambodia has given to us on assistance. Thai officials have suggested that the U.S. reaction may prove that they have used the wrong techniques in getting U.S. aid. North Vietnam on July 15 established a Cabinet-level National Unification Commission. There has been a growing emphasis by North Vietnam on the struggle for South Vietnam. The emphasis has been on peaceful unification but there have also been increasing subversive activities.

Turning to Burma, Mr. Dulles noted that U Nu had resumed the premiership in April. There were indications that the business of government was bogging down increasingly in Burma; in particular, a

[7] Reported in telegram 179 from Paris, July 12. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

governmental committee which had been established to settle policy questions was bogged down. The U Nu Government was more likely to accept Bloc aid than the Ne Win Government had been.

Following Mr. Dulles' briefing on the situation in Southeast Asia, Secretary Herter referred to the UN presence in Laos. He then went on to say that the Thais were worried about Cambodia and that while the Thai Foreign Minister was here with the King, he had seen Hammarskjold about the possibility of establishing a UN presence in that area. One question at the moment was whether Sihanouk would go first to Peiping or to Paris on his currently planned trip. The Secretary said he could not agree more with Mr. Dulles' view of Sihanouk. Secretary Anderson inquired about the health of General Sarit. Mr. Dulles indicated that he was presently in reasonably good health.

Mr. Gray then briefed the Council on the proposed changes in the policy. (A copy of Mr. Gray's Briefing Note is filed in the Minutes of the Meeting and another is attached to this Memorandum.)[8] After Mr. Gray had completed his presentation of the proposed changes dealing with Cambodia, Mr. McCone pointed out, with reference to Paragraph 44,[9] that the Council had heard this morning a report by Mr. Dulles indicating that Cambodia was reaching toward Peiping for assistance and that Sihanouk had sent his three sons to Communist China for their education. The revised policy paragraphs say that the U.S. should discourage assistance from Peiping. Yet the policy also provided for no increase in U.S. assistance. Mr. McCone felt that we either matched Bloc assistance regardless of cost or we did not. He did not feel that these policy provisions were well tied together. In response Mr. Gray said that the factual situation was that Sihanouk had not yet submitted a formal request for arms. Under the language of the proposed policy we would seek to keep Cambodia from accepting "substantial" Bloc aid. The Planning Board had discussed whether we would match any offer of Soviet assistance and the general view had been that the amount of U.S. assistance provided would be governed by the reference to "modest" military aid. Nonetheless, Mr. Gray acknowledged that the operators would face a problem if Cambodia received substantial aid from the Bloc. In such a case we might not be able to adhere to this proposed policy but we could not now predict what might be needed.

Secretary Herter thought that Communist China would have a practical problem in getting matériel to Cambodia. Unless it were airlifted in, it would have to go through Thailand, Laos or Vietnam. Any substantial airlift would be a signal for Thailand or Vietnam to

[8] The briefing note is included in the microfiche supplement.

[9] This draft paragraph called for the continuance of "modest" military aid to Cambodia to maintain internal security and discourage Cambodian acceptance of military aid from the "Sino-Soviet Bloc." See footnote 5 above.

react. Mr. Dulles pointed out that it would be possible for Communist China to get matériel to Cambodia by water, although he agreed with Secretary Herter that it would take a long time for Chinese assistance to get to Cambodia by this means. Mr. Gray then pointed out that the draft revisions did permit aid to Cambodia for the purpose of precluding assistance from the Bloc. It was not possible to write a financial appendix giving dollar amounts for such possible assistance that would be accurate today. Heretofore, however, military assistance has been provided for internal security purposes only. Now the policy recognized this additional purpose.

Mr. McCone suggested that a question of philosophy was involved which related to every independent country in the world. This was the first time to his knowledge that such an objective for aid had been included in a policy paper. If this objective applied here, it would also apply elsewhere. He thought we would want to look carefully at such a change because it might have quite a price tag attached. In response Mr. Gray noted that we had no general policy of matching Soviet military or economic aid around the world. Secretary Herter pointed out that the proposed changes recognized that there was a particular problem in Cambodia. Secretary Gates suggested that the figures in the draft financial appendix did give an indication of the relative U.S. effort in each of these countries. The financial appendix estimated that all types of aid for Cambodia for the period FY 1959 through FY 1964 inclusive would total $93 million. This, he suggested, was not "peanuts".

In this connection Mr. Gray said he wished to turn the attention of the Council to Vietnam for a minute. There was under consideration a military program for Vietnam which contemplated the introduction of jet aircraft into Vietnam. Because the introduction of such aircraft would be contrary to the Geneva Agreement, the Planning Board proposed that any decision on this matter be considered in the NSC. The Planning Board also recommended that any proposal to provide jet aircraft to Cambodia be considered in the NSC. Sihanouk has asked for jets. Mr. Gray did not believe, however, that the financial appendix included provision for jets for Cambodia. In the normal course of mutual security programming they would not be provided for at least two years in any event. Secretary Herter agreed that we would want to take a good look before we decided to give jets to Vietnam. Secretary Gates suggested provision of jets to Cambodia involved a question of morale or prestige.

Mr. Allen pointed out to the Council that the proposed Cambodian policy paragraph did not represent any new or unique policy. For example, efforts had been made by the U.S. Government to keep Soviet arms out of the Middle East, Cuba, and the Congo. Mr. Gray read from Paragraph 25–b of NSC 5906/1 (Basic National Secu-

rity Policy)[10] which states that the U.S. should be prepared to provide limited military assistance to non-allied countries in order to "seek to prevent them from falling within the Communist sphere of influence."

Mr. Gray then completed the briefing of the Council on the proposed changes in the Southeast Asia policy. In the course of his briefing he referred to the changes in the military assistance paragraph for Laos and pointed out that no increase in the Laos military assistance program was contemplated. Secretary Herter said that the whole situation in Laos should be considered in the light of contingency plans that had been developed by SEATO. In SEATO we have gone far toward developing plans for dealing with an act of aggression against Laos. Mr. Gray said that the Planning Board would refine the draft financial appendix[11] and would not trouble the Council with it unless there was serious disagreement among the agencies. He also stated that the Council Record of Action would show that the questions of jet aircraft for Cambodia and Laos [*Vietnam*] would be considered by the Council prior to any decision to provide such aircraft. Secretary Herter pointed out that an Indian, a Canadian, and a Pole located in Vietnam were responsible for seeing that the Geneva accords are carried out; we should take a good look before we introduced jet aircraft into Vietnam. We had modernized Korean forces on the grounds that North Korea had violated the armistice. We would need to take a good look at what would justify a shift in Vietnam.

Mr. McCone said he had the same point on Laos that he had on Cambodia. He felt that the added aid objective for military assistance changed completely the level of military assistance that might be required. He hoped that the Planning Board would give consideration to this matter in its work on the financial appendix. He thought it was unrealistic to change our objectives and then say that no change was required in the amount of assistance. How would those who implemented the paper deal with this problem? Mr. Gray pointed out that the paper did not say that there would be no increase. The Planning Board was only saying what State and Defense had indicated—that the objectives stated in the policy paragraph could be met within the same general level of aid. Mr. Gray then reminded the Council of the ground rules on financial appendices, pointing out that they were submitted only for information and did not constitute a budget document.

Mr. Irwin suggested that the situation in Cambodia was different from that in Laos. In Cambodia we had a political problem and might, for political reasons related to Sihanouk's frame of mind, have to meet

[10] See footnote 6, Document 44.

[11] Dated July 19. (Department of State, S/P–NSC Files: Lot 62 D 1, NSC 5809 Series)

Cambodian demands for assistance. The question in Laos was not political in that sense. The government in Laos was favorable to the West. There was no pressure from a political point of view to supply the Laotians with equipment which they could not use. If it were a matter of maintaining more than an initial Laotian capability to defend the frontiers of Laos for a short time, the problem went beyond Laos itself and became a SEATO and a U.S. problem. The broadening of the language for Laos might make a difference in the long run but not in the short run. Mr. Gray stated that when the Planning Board dealt with the figures in the financial appendix, it would address itself to the questions Mr. McCone has raised. Secretary Gates said he understood that the reason for the proposed note in the Record of Action was to allay the fears of those who thought that the new language meant a large increase in U.S. military assistance for Laos. Mr. Gray said he thought the question Mr. McCone had raised was a fair one and that if any substantial increase in assistance to Laos was contemplated, it would be called to the attention of the NSC. Secretary Herter suggested that if we increased military assistance to Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam would soon be crying that Cambodia planned to use the military equipment the U.S. provided against them rather than against Communist China.

Mr. Dulles thought that we should look soon at the problem of U.S. and French military training missions in Laos. Secretary Herter said that the French had agreed to increase their training mission but had not done so. We were now talking about the possibility of phasing out our mission slowly unless they increase the size of their mission to bring it up to the level of ours.

The National Security Council:[12]

a. Discussed the proposed changes to NSC 5809, prepared by the NSC Planning Board and transmitted by the reference memorandum of July 11, 1960; in the light of the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thereon, transmitted by the reference memorandum of July 18, 1960, and of an oral briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence on the situations in Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam.

b. Adopted the changes to NSC 5809 transmitted by the reference memorandum of July 11, 1960.

c. Agreed that, at such time as policy decisions are required as to whether jet aircraft should be provided to Cambodia or Vietnam, these questions should be referred to the National Security Council for consideration.

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[12] Paragraphs a–d and the Note that follows constitute NSC Action No. 2267, approved by the President on July 25. (*Ibid.*, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

d. Noted that the NSC Planning Board, in its revision of the draft Financial Appendix for Mainland Southeast Asia, would consider the questions raised in the Council meeting regarding the level of military assistance to Cambodia and Laos.

Note: The above actions subsequently approved by the President. NSC 5809, with the approved amendments and a revised Financial Appendix, and the action in c above, circulated as NSC 6012[13] for implementation by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and referred to the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency.

[Here follow items 2–4.]

Robert H. Johnson

[13] *Infra.*

65. National Security Council Report[1]

NSC 6012 *Washington, July 25, 1960.*

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON U. S. POLICY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

REFERENCES

A. NSC 5809

B. OCB Special Report on NSC 5809, dated February 10, 1960

C. NSC Action No. 2193

D. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated July 11 and 18, 1960

E. NSC Action No. 2267

[1] Source: Department of State, S/P–NSC Files: Lot 62 D 1. Secret. The source text includes revised pages resulting from a new paragraph 18 and certain revisions in paragraphs 29 and 30 (formerly paragraphs 28 and 29), all of which were incorporated in NSC 6012 on August 24. The reasons for these changes, which deal with overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and the relations of Southeast Asian nations with the Republic of China, are set forth in memoranda from Boggs to the NSC and from Parsons to Herter dated August 5 and 11, respectively. (*Ibid.*, S/S–NSC Files: Lot 63 D 351; included in the microfiche supplement)

The National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and Mr. Elmer B. Staats for the Director, Bureau of the Budget, at the 452nd NSC Meeting on July 21, 1960, adopted the changes to NSC 5809 transmitted by the reference memorandum of July 11, 1960 (NSC Action No. 2267).

The President, as of this date, approved the changes to NSC 5809, which as amended is enclosed herewith as NSC 6012; directs the implementation of NSC 6012 by all appropriate Executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government; and designated the Operations Coordinating Board as the coordinating agency.

A revised Financial Appendix, in preparation pursuant to NSC Action No. 2267–d, will be circulated later. [2]

By NSC Action No. 2267–c, the Council agreed that, at such time as policy decisions are required as to whether jet aircraft should be provided to Cambodia or Viet Nam, these questions should be referred to the National Security Council for consideration.

The enclosed statement of policy, as approved, supersedes NSC 5809.

James. S. Lay, Jr. [3]

Enclosure

[Here follows a table of contents.]

STATEMENT OF POLICY ON U.S. POLICY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA [4]

I. General Considerations

1. *General.* Since Mainland Southeast Asia does not represent a unified area, courses of action must generally be determined in the light of widely varying country situations. However, basic objectives and main directions of U.S. policy can and should be established on a regional basis.

2. *Consequences of Communist Domination.* The national security of the United States would be endangered by Communist domination of Mainland Southeast Asia, whether achieved by overt aggression, subversion, or a political and economic offensive.

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[2] The financial appendix is included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

[4] For purposes of this paper, "Mainland Southeast Asia" consists of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam, Malaya and Singapore. In addition, there is attached a supplementary statement of policy on the special situation in North Viet Nam. [Footnote in the source text.]

a. The loss to Communist control of any single free country would encourage tendencies toward accommodation by the rest.

b. The loss of the entire area would have a seriously adverse impact on the U.S. position elsewhere in the Far East, have severe economic consequences for many nations of the Free World, add significant resources to the Communist Bloc in rice, rubber, tin and other minerals, and could result in severe economic and political pressures on Japan and India for accommodation to the Communist Bloc. The loss of Southeast Asia mainland could thus have far-reaching consequences seriously adverse to U.S. security interests.

3. *The Communist Threat*

a. *Overt Aggression.* Although Communist policy now emphasizes non-military methods, the danger of overt aggression will remain inherent so long as Communist China and North Viet Nam continue a basically hostile policy supported by substantial military forces. There is only a cease-fire in Viet Nam and sporadic hostilities continue in Laos. The Viet Minh have continued to improve their combat capabilities since the Geneva Conference of 1954.

b. *Subversion.* In most countries of Southeast Asia a threat also arises from the existence of extensive local Communist capabilities for all types of subversive activities, ranging up to armed insurrection. Additionally, the large overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia offer a fertile field for subversion. The weak internal security systems of the Southeast Asian states make them highly vulnerable to such activities.

c. *Communist Political and Economic Offensive.* At present overt aggression and, except in the cases of Viet Nam and Laos, militant subversion are less likely than an intensified campaign of Communist political, economic and cultural penetration in the area. The political instability, economic backwardness, export problems, and extreme nationalism of these countries provide many opportunities for Communist exploitation by trade and economic assistance, conventional political and diplomatic activity, and extensive infiltration. This offensive now constitutes a threat to U.S. interests more subtle and more difficult to cope with than other threats.

4. *U.S. Role.* The United States is likely to remain the only major outside source of power to counteract the Russian-Chinese Communist thrust into Southeast Asia. Thus, the retention of this area in the Free World will continue to depend on the extent and effectiveness of U.S. support as well as on the local efforts of the countries themselves.

a. *Political.* The underlying purpose of U.S. assistance in the area is to help the non-Communist countries develop more effective political organizations, strengthen their internal administration and enlist greater allegiance in both urban and rural districts. In part, this purpose will be served by programs for military and economic aid dealt with below. In part it will require an intensification of present programs for training competent Asian managerial and technical personnel. And, in part, new approaches, both governmental and private, will be needed. These should not concentrate exclusively at the na-

tional level, but should include activities designed to strengthen and vitalize indigenous traditions and institutions and to have an impact on village life, rural society, and educational systems.

b. *Military.* Because these countries do not have the capability of creating armed forces which could effectively resist large-scale external aggression, the United States will be required to provide a basic shield against Communist aggression. For the foreseeable future, local will to resist aggression will depend on a conviction in Southeast Asia that the United States will continue its support and will maintain striking forces adequate to counter aggression in Southeast Asia with the capabilities described in current basic national security policy. The combination of such U.S. forces and local will to resist would constitute the best deterrent against aggression. Should the deterrent fail, this combination would also provide the most effective insurance that, in conjunction with indigenous and allied forces, the United States could suppress aggression in the area quickly and in a manner and on a scale best calculated to avoid the hostilities broadening into general war.

c. *Economic and Technical.* The insistence, throughout most of the area, on economic development provides the strongest lever for the exertion of influence by the Free World or by the Communist Bloc. Without increased external help from some source, most of the governments of the area will be unable, even with adequate indigenous effort, to manage the political demand for rapid betterment in the conditions of life and provide for sound economic development. Failure to obtain such assistance from the Free World will tend to drive these countries toward economic dependence on the Communist Bloc. The general preference in Southeast Asia for Western technical and economic assistance gives the United States and the Free World an opportunity to obtain primacy over Communist efforts in key economic sectors. The outcome may, however, be strongly influenced by the success with which the Free World can cope with Communist efforts to exploit the existence of Southeast Asian export problems, particularly those involving rice. In the period ahead, flexibility of U.S. procedure and rapidity of U.S. action will be increasingly important, if effective advantage is to be taken of unexpected and transient opportunities.

5. *The Problem of Regional Association.* Over the long run, the small, vulnerable, and essentially dependent nations of Southeast Asia cannot exist satisfactorily as free nations without closer associations than now exist.

6. *The Problem of Alignment.* To preserve their independence, strengthen their internal stability, and protect themselves against aggression, some countries in Southeast Asia prefer to join regional security arrangements. Some, however, prefer to avoid alignment with other nations. The basic objective of both groups is to maintain the independence of their countries free of outside interference or dictation, and the independence and vitality of both are important to the United States and to each other.

II. Policy Conclusions

7. The national independence of the mainland Southeast Asian states is important to the security interests of the United States. If such independence is to be preserved, U.S. policies must seek to build sufficient strength in the area at least to identify aggression, suppress subversion, prevent Communist political and economic domination, and assist the non-Communist governments to consolidate their domestic positions. U.S. policy should not depend primarily on the degree and nature of Communist activity at any particular time, but should seek to promote these goals within the limits of the economic capacities of the countries concerned and U.S. resources available for the area.

8. Where a national determination to maintain independence and oppose external aggression is sufficiently manifest, the United States should be prepared to provide military assistance based upon the missions of the forces as indicated in the "Country Courses of Action" (Part V, below).

9. In the event of aggression against a Southeast Asian state willing to resist, the provisions of the UN Charter or the SEATO Treaty should be invoked, but the United States should not forgo necessary action in behalf of such a state or states because of the possibility that other allies might be loath to participate or to furnish more than token military forces.

10. In the long run, the ability of the non-Communist governments to attain political, economic and social objectives will be the dominant factor in defeating the Communist attempts to dominate Southeast Asia. The United States should assist the non-Communist states of the area to formulate and execute programs designed to promote conditions of sound development, to demonstrate that they can achieve growth without reliance on Communist methods or dependence on the Communist Bloc, and to give their peoples a greater stake in the continued independence of their countries.

11. The United States should continue to make clear its own devotion to the principle of collective security, its belief that regional security arrangements provide maximum protection at minimum cost for all, and its expectation that a country's decision to participate in such arrangements is based on its own calculation of its best interests and does not of itself constitute a claim for increased financial aid. Where countries participate, measures to assure adherence are desirable, normally including preferential treatment in the fields of economic and military assistance as justified by U.S. strategic objectives. Where new opportunities for affiliation develop they should be encouraged. The United States should, however, accept the right of each nation to choose its own path to the future, and should not exert

pressure to make active allies of countries not so inclined. The genuine independence of such countries from Communism serves U.S. interests even though they are not formally aligned with the United States. The United States should accordingly support and assist them so long as they remain determined to preserve their own independence and are actively pursing policies to this end.

III. Objectives

12. To prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into or becoming economically dependent upon the Communist Bloc; to persuade them that their best interests lie in greater cooperation and stronger affiliations with the rest of the Free World; and to assist them to develop toward stable, free representative governments with the will and ability to resist Communism from within and without, and thereby to contribute to the strengthening of the Free World.

IV. Regional Courses of Action[5]

13. Support and assist the countries of the area on the basis of their will and ability to defend and strengthen their independence.

14. Respect each country's choice of national policy for preserving its independence, but make every effort to demonstrate the advantages of greater cooperation and closer alignment with the Free World, as well as the dangers of alignment with the Communist Bloc.

15. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to cooperate closely with each other on a basis of mutual aid and support, and support indigenous efforts to develop regional associations so long as they do not weaken SEATO or the spirit of resistance to Communism.

16. Participate actively in SEATO, and seek to develop both its miltary and non-military aspects in a manner that will convincingly demonstrate the value of SEATO as a regional association, the usefulness of which extends beyond deterrence of Communist expansion. Encourage limited participation of non-Communist, non-SEATO Asian nations in certain SEATO activities.

17. Encourage and support the spirit of resistance among the peoples of Southeast Asia to Chinese Communist aggression as well as to indigenous Communist insurrection, subversion, and propaganda.

18. Encourage the Governments of Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam to maintain close relations with the GRC and to support its international position as the Government of China. Having in mind the desirability, from the U.S. point of view, of Malaya and Singapore developing closer relations with the GRC, encourage these Governments, as appropriate, to take steps that will lead ultimately to this

[5] The following courses of action are not applicable to the State of Singapore at this time: paragraphs 13, 14, 16, 22–a, and 32. [Footnote in the source text.]

objective. Seek to ensure that Malaya does not recognize the Chinese Communist regime or support its seating in the United Nations as the Government of China, and that Singapore does not develop closer economic or cultural relations with Communist China. Encourage the countries of the area to eschew relations with the Communist regimes of North Korea and North Viet Nam and to support the international position of the Governments of the Republics of Viet Nam and of Korea.

19. Maintain, in the general area of the Far East, U.S. forces adequate to exert a deterrent influence against Communist aggression, in conformity with current basic national security policy.

20. Should overt Communist aggression occur in the Southeast Asian treaty area, invoke the UN Charter or the SEATO Treaty, or both as applicable; and subject to local request for assistance take necessary military and any other action to assist any Mainland Southeast Asian state or dependent territory in the SEATO area willing to resist Communist resort to force: *Provided,* that the taking of military action shall be subject to prior submission to and approval by the Congress unless the emergency is deemed by the President to be so great that immediate action is necessary to save a vital interest of the United States.

21. In case of an imminent or actual Communist attempt to seize control from within, and assuming some manifest local desire for U.S. assistance, take all feasible measures to thwart the attempt, including even military action after appropriate Congressional action.

22. As appropriate, assist the police forces in Southeast Asian countries to obtain training and equipment to detect and contain Communist activities.

23. In order to strengthen the non-Communist governments of the area and to help forestall their economic dependence on the Communist Bloc:

a. Provide flexible economic and technical assistance as necessary to attain U.S. objectives. In the framing of U.S. aid programs to Southeast Asian countries take into account the economic and technical assistance being provided by other Free World nations and by international institutions, coordinating with such nations and institutions where appropriate.

b. Encourage measures to improve the climate for private investment, both domestic and foreign, and to mobilize the maximum investment of U.S. private capital in the area consistent with the prevailing climate.

c. Encourage United Nations agencies, other Colombo Plan countries, and other friendly countries to contribute available resources to promote the economic growth of Southeast Asia.

d. Encourage the Southeast Asian countries to orient their economies in the direction of the Free World and to rely primarily on non-Communist markets and sources of supply for trade, technicians, capital development, and atomic development.

e. In carrying out programs involving disposal of U.S. agricultural surpluses abroad:

(1) Give particular attention to the economic vulnerabilities of the Southeast Asian countries and avoid, to the maximum extent practicable, detracting from the ability of these countries to market their own exportable produce.

(2) Give particular emphasis to the use of the resources to promote multilateral trade and economic development.

f. Promote as appropriate the expansion of trade relationships between the United States and the countries of Southeast Asia.

g. Take advantage of adverse local reactions to Communist barter agreements with countries in the area by demonstrating the advantages to these countries of conducting trade on a multilateral commercial basis.

24. Make a special, sustained effort to help educate an expanding number of technically competent, pro-Western civilian and military leaders, working bilaterally, through the United Nations, with the other Colombo Plan countries and with other friendly countries. Stress the development of potential and secondary leadership to support the thin stratum of elite now administering the central governments and bring to their support modern techniques and technology in public information and organization.

25. Place increased emphasis on community development projects, educational programs, and other activities aimed to influence the welfare and attitudes of the people at the village level.

26. Strengthen informational, cultural and educational activities, as appropriate, to foster increased alignment of the people with the Free World and to contribute to an understanding of Communist aims and techniques.

27. Hold or reduce the number of U.S. officials in each country to a strict minimum consistent with sound implementation of essential programs, in order to head off an adverse political reaction to the presence of a large number of Americans in relatively privileged positions.

28. Promote increasing Asian Buddhist contact with and knowledge of the Free World. Explore with friendly religious organizations ways of developing Buddhist fraternal associations and identification with Free World religious leaders and movements.

29. When not in conflict with other U.S. political objectives, continue activities designed to encourage the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia (a) to integrate fully and as rapidly as practicable into the national life of their host countries, becoming loyal citizens and identi-

fying themselves with the interests of these countries; (b) to support and participate in anti-Communist activities in their countries of domicile; (c) to resist Communist efforts to infiltrate and gain control of their communities. Seek to ensure that elements within these communities that continue to feel and act as Chinese rather than as citizens of their host countries look to the GRC as the custodian of Chinese social and cultural values and support it as the representative of the interests and aspirations of the Chinese people.

30. Discreetly encourage the governments of the countries of the area to promote and facilitate the integration of racial minorities, bearing in mind that the extent and pace of such integration will be affected by the willingness of the host countries to permit the overseas Chinese and other minorities to participate in the national life without discrimination.

[*Numbered paragraph 31 (2½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

32. Promote economic cooperation between the countries of the area and Japan and with the Government of the Republic of China, to the extent feasible without jeopardizing the achievement of U.S. objectives toward the individual Southeast Asian countries.

33. In order to promote increased cooperation in the area and to deny the general area of the Mekong River Basin to Communist influence or domination, assist as feasible in the development of the Mekong River Basin as a nucleus for regional cooperation and mutual aid.

34. Should any country in the area cease to demonstrate a will to resist internal Communist subversion and to carry out a policy of maintaining its independence, terminate U.S. economic and military assistance programs to such nations.

35. Exercise caution to ensure that the United States does not become so identified, either in fact or in the eyes of the world, with particular regimes, individuals or political factions in the countries of the area as to hinder U.S. accommodation to changes in the political scene.

V. Country Courses of Action in Addition to the "Regional Courses of Action" Above

Burma

36. In view of the emerging opportunities in Burma and the repercussions that developments there will have on the uncommitted areas of Asia and Africa, make a special effort to influence an increasingly favorable orientation in Burma's policies.

37. Encourage and support those elements in Burma which can maintain a stable free government that identifies its interest with those of the Free World and resists Communist inducements, threats, and programs to subvert Burma's independence.

38. Encourage Burmese assumption of regional and international responsibilities compatible with our own objectives.

39. For political purposes, upon Burmese request make military training available on a grant basis and modest amounts of military equipment and supplies on a sales or token payment basis, as consistent with U.S. interests.

40. Encourage the Burmese Government to establish internal security throughout the country, and discourage further foreign assistance to Chinese Nationalist irregulars and ethnic rebel groups in Burma.

41. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Burma, invoke the UN Charter and, subject to Burmese request for assistance, take necessary military and any other action to assist Burma if Burma is willing to resist Communist resort to force and U.S. vital interests are involved: *Provided,* that the taking of military action shall be subject to prior submission to the approval by the Congress.

Cambodia

42. Seek to increase Cambodia's respect for and confidence in the United States and the Free World in order to assist in maintaining Cambodia's independence and in curbing its tendency to increased orientation toward the Sino-Soviet Bloc. To this end demonstrate continued friendly U.S. support for Cambodia's independence, understanding of its policy of neutrality, and concern for its economic and social progress.

43. In shaping particular courses of action in Cambodia, take into account the fact that Prince Sihanouk enjoys wide-spread popularity, particularly among the rural population, and controls all major sources of political power. Devote special efforts toward developing Sihanouk's understanding of U.S. policies and of the U.S. position in Southeast Asia, bearing in mind his extreme sensitivity to any suggestion of pressure or slight.

44. Since real or fancied threats from neighboring Free World countries have been a major factor contributing to Cambodia's sense of insecurity and its consequent readiness to accept Sino-Soviet Bloc support, endeavor persistently and firmly to improve Cambodia's relations with these countries, particularly Thailand and Viet Nam. Take every appropriate occasion to impress on the governments of neighboring countries the importance of repairing their relations with Cambodia.

45. Seek means effectively to promote a sense of responsibility on the part of Sihanouk and other Cambodian leaders for exerting sustained effort to create conditions conducive to better relations with neighboring countries and for avoiding contentious and provocative

statements. When feasible and consistent with over-all U.S. interests, take steps to prevent provocative actions by any of the countries concerned.

46. Encourage positive cooperation between Cambodia and neighboring countries such as joint participation in the development of the Lower Mekong River Basin as a nucleus for regional cooperation and mutual aid.

47. Continue to provide modest military aid to enable the Cambodian armed forces to maintain internal security against Communist subversion or other elements hostile to U.S. interests and to discourage Cambodia from accepting substantial military aid from the Sino-Soviet Bloc.

48. Concentrate U.S. economic and technical assistance primarily in those areas in which increased Communist influence would entail the greatest threat to Cambodia's neutrality and independence.

49. In view of the relatively strong position still maintained by France in Cambodia, seek opportunities for greater mutual understanding and cooperation with the French in the furtherance of common Free World objectives.

Laos

50. Provide military assistance for the development and support of Lao armed forces capable of maintaining internal security against Communist subversion or other elements hostile to U.S. interests and providing limited initial resistance to Communist aggression. Encourage Laos to formulate and implement a broadly conceived security plan, including both internal and external security, which encompass the services of all branches of the Royal Government, civil and military.

51. In the provision of U.S. assistance, direct our programs to the promotion of social and economic progress and unification of Laos, thus helping maintain the confidence of the Royal Government in its anti-Communist, pro-Free World "neutrality."

52. Continue to promote conditions engendering confidence by Lao leaders that the UN Charter, SEATO, and Free World support provide a favorable basis for Lao resistance to Communist pressure and inducements, and at the same time continue to impress upon the Lao the need for a sense of responsibility and recognition that too drastic actions may have adverse international implications.

53. Encourage the Lao to observe constitutional and legal processes as providing the soundest basis for the growth and vitality of democratic institutions; discourage resort to force in political affairs.

54. Encourage the Lao Government to give emphasis to programs tending to reorient disaffected elements of the population.

55. Encourage and support cooperation between Laos and other Southeast Asian countries, particularly Thailand, Viet Nam, the Philippines, Malaya, and Burma, including such joint efforts in the anti-subversion, economic, communications, and military fields as is feasible.

56. Develop greater mutual understanding and cooperation with the French in the furtherance of common Free World objectives.

57. Strongly support "the UN presence" and expanded UN technical assistance in Laos, and make a special intensified effort to encourage other friendly nations to assume a larger share of responsibility for the support of the country.

Thailand

58. Promote the development of a Thai leadership which is increasingly united, stable and constructive, is supported by the Thai people, and willing to continue the alignment of Thailand with the United States and the West.

[*Numbered paragraph 59 (5½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

60. Provide military assistance to Thailand for support of forces sufficient:

a. To maintain internal security.
b. To present limited initial resistance to external aggression.
c. To make a modest contribution to collective defense of contiguous SEATO areas.

Continue to urge the Thai Government to improve the organization of the Thai Armed Forces so as to make a maximum contribution to the above objectives.

61. Encourage and support an improvement in relations between Thailand and Cambodia.

Viet Nam

62. Assist Free Viet Nam to develop a strong, stable and constitutional government to enable Free Viet Nam to assert an increasingly attractive contrast to conditions in the present Communist zone. In this regard encourage and assist public relations and public information programs of the Government of Viet Nam directed both internally to the Free Vietnamese and externally to North Viet Nam.

63. Work toward the weakening of the Communists in North and South Viet Nam in order to bring about the eventual peaceful reunification of a free and independent Viet Nam under anti-Communist leadership.

64. Support the position of the Government of Free Viet Nam that all-Viet Nam elections may take place only after it is satisfied that genuinely free elections can be held throughout both zones of Viet Nam.

65. Assist Free Viet Nam to build up indigenous armed forces, including independent logistical and administrative services, which will be capable of assuring internal security and of providing limited initial resistance to attack by the Viet Minh.

66. Encourage Vietnamese military planning for defense against external aggression along lines consistent with U.S. planning concepts based upon approved U.S. policy, and discreetly manifest in other ways U.S. interest in assisting Free Viet Nam, in accordance with the SEATO Treaty, to defend itself against external aggression.

67. Encourage and support an improvement in relations between Viet Nam and Cambodia.

Federation of Malaya

68. Encourage the continued development of a strong, stable Malaya within the Commonwealth.

69. Encourage the Commonwealth to exercise primary responsibility in Malaya but be prepared to assist, as necessary, in the maintenance of Malaya's stability and independence.

70. In the application to Malaya of the course of action in paragraph 23–a, be prepared to provide needed technical assistance to Malaya, and consider the extension of loans for economic development if alternate sources of financing prove to be inadequate.

71. Discreetly encourage the present Malayan leadership to improve its position of strength and responsibility unless more favorable alternatives develop.

72. Discreetly encourage Malaya's participation and membership in SEATO, avoiding any actions which might strengthen neutralist sentiment.

73. Encourage the Malayan Government to take vigorous actions to curb Communist subversion and to rely primarily on the Commonwealth for any assistance required.

74. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Malaya, place initial reliance on Commonwealth, SEATO or UN resources as appropriate, but be prepared, subject to Malayan request for assistance, to take independent U.S. action along the lines of the proviso in paragraph 20.

Singapore

75. Bearing in mind Singapore's strategic position and its importance to the Free World, encourage development toward a politically stable, economically viable Singapore, willing to cooperate with the United States and capable of resisting internal and external Communist threats.

76. Encourage and support British, Australian, Federation of Malaya and Singapore Government efforts to strengthen moderate political forces in order to counteract as much as possible the extreme left's pull on the Government. Be prepared, however, after consultation with the British, to take such independent action as necessary to accomplish this end.

77. In case the Communists or extreme leftists move to gain control of the Government by legal or violent means, consult with the United Kingdom, the Federation, and if appropriate other interested parties, and as necessary support counteraction, being prepared, as necessary, to take independent action along the lines of paragraph 21.

78. Should overt Communist aggression occur against Singapore, place initial reliance on the resources possessed by Singapore, the British and the Federation of Malaya, but be prepared to take action, if necessary, in accordance with paragraph 20.

79. While recognizing the desire of Singapore to merge with the Federation, do not encourage such a step unless and until such action appears to be useful in achieving both long-range and short-range U.S. aims as set forth in paragraphs 75 and 76; in the meantime use the Singapore Government's desire for closer ties and eventual merger with the Federation in an effort to counteract the extreme left's pull on the government.

80. Encourage efforts by the Government of Singapore to solve its political and economic problems in ways consistent with U.S. objectives. To the extent feasible, rely on the United Kingdom to provide external financial support to Singapore and, to the extent desired by the United Kingdom, support the utilization of Free World international financial institutions in the promoting of economic development and economic reforms in Singapore. Be prepared, however, to provide U.S. technical and economic development assistance when such assistance would be of special significance in achieving U.S. objectives.

81. In all U.S. activities in Singapore, keep in mind the continuing British responsibility for Singapore's defense and foreign affairs, and the British role in internal security as well as British knowledge and experiences in governing Singapore, and seek to avoid action likely to cause a serious misunderstanding between the United States and the United Kingdom.

VI. Supplementary Statement of Policy on the Special Situation in North Viet Nam

82. Treat the Viet Minh as not constituting a legitimate government, and discourage other non-Communist states from developing or maintaining relations with the Viet Minh regime.

83. Prevent the Viet Minh from expanding their political influence and territorial control in Free Viet Nam and Southeast Asia.

84. Deter the Viet Minh from attacking or subverting Free Viet Nam or Laos.

85. Probe weaknesses of the Viet Minh and exploit them internally and internationally whenever possible.

86. Exploit nationalist sentiment within North Viet Nam as a means of weakening and disrupting Sino-Soviet domination.

87. Assist the Government of Viet Nam to undertake programs of political, economic and psychological warfare against Viet Minh Communists.

88. Apply, as necessary to achieve U.S. objectives, restrictions on U.S. exports and shipping and on foreign assets similar to those already in effect for Communist China and North Korea.

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66. Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Steeves) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Hare)[1]

Washington, October 24, 1960.

SUBJECT

Semi-Annual Appraisal of Policy for Australia and New Zealand

On October 26, 1960, the Operations Coordinating Board will consider the semi-annual appraisal of policy for Australia and New Zealand.[2] It is anticipated that you will represent the Department of State at that meeting. Mr. Arthur B. Emmons, Deputy Director of Southwest Pacific Affairs, and Mr. Edward P. Prince, desk officer on Australia and New Zealand, will be present to assist in whatever manner you desire.

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[1] Source: Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Australia and New Zealand. Secret. Drafted by Edward P. Prince and cleared by Emmons.

[2] The results of the previous appraisal are in OCB reports on Australia and New Zealand, dated March 2. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

At present the United States policy toward the two countries is considered in one National Security Council paper (NSC 5713/2)[3] which is entitled "Long-Range United States Policy Interests in Australia and New Zealand". The OCB is being asked to concur in the judgment of the Board Assistants that conditions affecting the operational relationships between the United States and these two countries have become sufficiently diverse as to warrant separate policy treatment for each of them.

Some of the reasons for this recommendation were well stated by the Embassy at Canberra in its Despatch 155 of September 9, 1960,[4] as follows:

"In view of recent changes which have taken place, the Embassy is strongly of the opinion that Australia and New Zealand should be treated separately. Such changes include the increased importance of Australia to the U.S. in such fields as outer space, greater Australian interest and activity in the diplomatic field in Asia and other parts of the world, the difference in the attitudes of the two governments regarding Red China and SEATO planning, and the profound differences in the internal economies of the two areas, to mention only a few examples. These, in turn, seem to require divergent treatment of our policies toward the two countries in terms of guidance, long-range potentialities, and objectives."

The Working Group[5] concurred in the views expressed by the Embassy and felt that the reasons for recommending separate policy treatment for Australia and New Zealand were further strengthened by recent evidences of divergent tendencies in the foreign policies pursued by the present Labor Government of New Zealand. The greatly expanded economic strength and influence of Australia in comparison with those of New Zealand were stressed as further factors of significant disparity. However, it is less because of immediate differences than because of the belief that such differences will grow with the passage of time that it appears to be appropriate to initiate separate policy treatment for the two countries.

At the Board Assistants meeting, there was considerable discussion as to the form such separation should take and it was decided to leave this somewhat technical detail open to a flexible interpretation through the use of the phrase "separate policy treatment". It is possible that the Board itself might wish to initiate a discussion on this point, namely, whether there should be two distinct policy papers, two sections to one paper or simply greater distinctions made under the subject headings of one paper. While such details may not be of sufficient importance to warrant the Board's consideration, this Bureau

[3] Dated August 23, 1957; *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 365–372.
[4] Not printed. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.43/9–960)
[5] Of the Board Assistants.

tends to favor the separate policy treatment of these countries in two distinct policy documents.[6]

[6] At its meeting on October 26, the OCB approved separate policy treatment for Australia and New Zealand and recommended that NSC 5713/2 be reviewed by the National Security Council. ("Semi-Annual Appraisal of Long-Range U.S. Policy Interests in Australia and New Zealand (NSC 5713/2)," November 2; Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Australia and New Zealand; included in the microfiche supplement)

Policy review of NSC 5713/2 was not completed in 1960.

67. Telegram From the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, November 19, 1960—5 p.m.

876. Thirteenth Military Advisers' meeting ended Bangkok November 18.[2] Australia joined US and Thailand in taking leading part in discussions. According US Military Adviser's assessment, Australian Military Adviser[3] proved his country good friend both US and Thailand in supporting strong points required give meaning to military planning.

As anticipated Thai Military Adviser[4] proposed addition two new assumptions to MPO plan 5/60[5] as basis counter-insurgency planning. These consisted of assumption that Lao Government will not ask for SEATO aid and assumption SEATO assistance offered but refused. Military Advisers agreed refer these assumptions to Military Planning Office for immediate study implications.

Other highlights of conference: 1) Agreed with US proposals amend communications committee recommendation for SEATO crypto center. US agreed supply SEATO and member countries with crypto materials (coding and decoding documents) to use for training,

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/11-1960. Secret; SEATO. Repeated to Vientiane, Saigon, Manila, Karachi, Canberra, London, Paris, Wellington, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] The conference took place in Bangkok Novenber 16-18. In telegram 867 from Bangkok, November 17, the Embassy summarized the public opening ceremony. (*Ibid.*, 379/11-1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling.

[4] General Surajit Charusreni.

[5] "Plan To Assist the Royal Laotian Government To Counter Communist Insurgency in Laos," dated August 31; forms Appendix B1 to "Report of the Military Advisers 13th Conference," November 1960. (Department of the Army, SEATO Subregistry (Microfilm) Files, Reel S-4-60)

SEATO exercises and, third set, for operations. 2) Agreed Military Advisers would recommend airfields which respective member nations should equip with minimum navigational aids for SEATO forces use. 3) Agreed on clarification of responsibility of SEATO forces commander for coordination with respect to Council and RLG in MPO plan 5/60. 4) Agreed on theater estimate as basis for plan 6/60[6] for defense of protocol states. Accepted US compromise wording for assumptions re use of nuclear weapons.[7] 5) Also agreed on statement for plan 6/60 defining mission of SEATO forces.[8] 6) Noted Thai intention submit paper to MPO proposing establishment of permanent intelligence office on military side. 7) Referred to Military Advisers representatives UK proposal that request for information from CSE and civil side be limited to items of purely civil intelligence and factual nature. 8) Considered communications committee recommendation for establishment communication circuits from Thailand to other treaty area countries for use particularly during SEATO emergencies.

Comment: Agreements on crypto materials and airfield designation may eventually be reflected in US assistance programs in form of requests for equipment and construction. UK position on MPO requests for civil studies appears to be rehash of position unsuccessfully taken on civil side in which UK attempted to shift burden for preparing intelligence studies entirely to military side. Thai assumptions, while expected, will raise issue of interpretation and application article 4 SEA Collective Defense Treaty.

Johnson

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[6] "Theater Estimate for the Development of MPO Plan 6/60 (A Plan for the Defense of the Protocol States Against Attack by Forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam)," September 1; forms Appendix C1 to the Report cited in footnote 5 above.

[7] In the draft theater estimate cited in footnote 6 above, the language on nuclear weapons in the "Assumptions" section stated that it was assumed that SEATO forces would use nuclear weapons on suitable enemy targets according to the general situation, but that this did not imply the automatic use of nuclear weapons in all situations. As revised by the Military Advisers in the "Summary Report" section of the overall Military Advisers report, the language stated, after changes had been introduced by the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, that SEATO forces would be prepared to use nuclear weapons on suitable enemy targets if the situation demanded, but that this policy did not imply the automatic use of nuclear weapons and would be dependent on political agreement.

[8] In the draft theater estimate, the mission was defined as defense of the Protocol States against attack by the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In the "Summary Report," the mission was altered to include not only defense, but a "quick and crushing" defeat of the DRV.

68. Telegram From the Department of State to the Delegation at the SEATO Council Meeting[1]

Washington, December 19, 1960—8:01 p.m.

898. UK Ambassador telephoned Parsons mid-afternoon Dec 19 that, according to report from UK representative on Dec 19 meeting Council Reps, Thai representative said Thai Ambassador in Vientiane had been requested by provisional RLG to warn SEATO to be prepared. Thai Rep then gave alarming account of PL military dispositions and North Vietnamese intervention in Laos.

British extremely concerned at this development and consider we must stop RLG from appealing to SEATO at this stage. We heartily concur it would be unwise for appeal to be made now, especially since new government appears to be consolidating its position in Vientiane and despite admittedly difficult situation there is good reason to hope it will be able to hold its own.

We strongly feel as we did in summer 1959 that RLG should not make any unwise appeal to SEATO, certainly not without consultation with us beforehand.

While we should not appear to be denigrating SEATO or its capabilities, you should take urgent steps to dissuade the Thai from promoting or encouraging any RLG appeal to SEATO at this time and indeed try discourage Phoumi from any thoughtless action this nature.

Ambassador Brown should take appropriate steps to forestall any unwise and precipitous actions by RLG. FYI. In Summer 1959 Kamphan Panya as Foreign Minister appealed to UN for emergency force without consulting us or even obtaining approval of Prime Minister Phoui. End FYI. [2]

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 379/12–1960. Secret; Niact; SEATO. Drafted by Anderson in SEA and approved by Parsons. Also sent niact to Vientiane and repeated niact to London, Paris, Canberra, Karachi, and Manila.

[2] In telegram 1070 from Bangkok, December 20, Johnson reported that the Thai Representative at the December 19 Council Representatives' meeting had mentioned the Lao Government's initiative briefly at the beginning of the meeting, and that in subsequent talks Thai officials were "taking very cautious conservative attitude and certainly not thinking in terms of any premature or precipitous appeal to SEATO by RLG." (*Ibid.*, 379/12–2060)

In an unnumbered telegram from Vientiane dated December 21, the Embassy reported that the reason for the Thai Representative's statement in the December 19 meeting was a request by Lao officers to an officer in Vientiane on December 16 "when outcome battle for Vientiane was still in doubt and they were uncertain its success. Purpose request was simply have SEATO informed and prepared." (*Ibid.*, 379/12–2160) Both telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

CAMBODIA

U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA; SOUTH VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS; LAO-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS; CAMBODIA'S RECOGNITION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND SIHANOUK'S VISIT TO BEIJING; SIHANOUK'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES [1]

69. Despatch From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State [2]

No. 296 *Phnom Penh, March 18, 1958.*

SUBJECT

Possibility of Cambodia's Abandoning its Policy of Neutrality

Since the first of the year Prince Sihanouk has been increasingly outspoken in his attacks on the Communists in Cambodia. During the past week with the Communists offering the only opposition in the national elections scheduled for March 23, the Prince has been more specific in tieing the Cambodian Communists up with international Communism.

The Embassy has considered the desirability of making efforts to persuade the Cambodian Government to abandon its policy of neutrality and the possibility of success if such a move were made. Accordingly, the attached outline paper [3] was developed in order to present the pros and cons in connection with such a step.

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[1] For previous documentation, see *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 403 ff. A combined microfiche supplement to this volume and to volume XV will be published covering the East Asia-Pacific region, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Malaya.

[2] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/3–1858. Secret. Copies were sent to Bangkok, Saigon, and Vientiane. Sent to Robertson under cover of a memorandum by Floyd L. Whittington, March 31, in which Whittington stated that SEA agreed with the views of the Embassy. Parsons wrote the following note on the memorandum: "I fully agree, Cambodia is currently neutral in favor of the US (*not* neutralist) and events since the despatch was written make it even more certain that an effort to align Cambodia with us would hurt, not help us. I think we might write and tell Strom we agree with him. J.G.P." Robertson added the following note: "I agree too, WSR."

[3] Included in the microfiche supplement.

It has been concluded that such a step would not be desirable under the circumstances. General Hartshorn, the Chief of MAAG/Cambodia, agrees with the attached paper.

Action Requested: Department please send copies to London, New Delhi, Paris, Rangoon, CINCPAC.

Edmund H. Kellogg
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

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70. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Whittington) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, April 4, 1958.

SUBJECT

Chinese Communist Aid to Cambodia

Attached is Despatch No. 278, dated March 10, 1958,[2] from Phnom Penh on the above subject. This is an excellent Despatch, and contains information on the Communist Aid Programs to Cambodia to date, together with possible repercussions on the United States aid program to Cambodia and United States policy toward Cambodia.

We have prepared a summary of this Despatch, which is also attached. You may find this summary useful in forthcoming hearings before Congressional Committees.

Attachment No. 2

Summary

Communist Bloc activities in Cambodia started in the Spring of 1956. These activities have included aid and trade agreements with Communist China, agreements with Czechoslovakia, agreements with the Soviet Union, agreements with Poland, various gifts to Cambodia

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA Files: Lot 63 D 73, 16.2 CPR Communist China, 1958–1960. Confidential. The memorandum and summary were drafted by C. Hoyt Price and cleared by J. Graham Parsons and Gardner Palmer.

[2] Not attached. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 851H.0060/3–1058) An attached summary of the despatch is printed in part below.

outside these agreements, and preliminary talks with Yugoslavia and North Viet-Nam. By far the largest aid program and the major activity has been carried on by the Communist Chinese.

This Communist Chinese aid program appears to be a means by which the Communist Chinese hope to gain respectability in Cambodia and Southeast Asia. The Communist Chinese apparently hope to remove the stigma of "imperialism" with which Red China and Asian Communism were saddled during the Viet Minh invasion of Cambodia in 1954 and Viet Minh sponsorship of uprising and terrorism within Cambodia. The Communist Chinese apparently consider the $22.9 million program as a cheap price to pay for a "good neighbor" reputation. All techniques of the Communist Chinese aid program appear to be devoted to pleasing the Cambodians, to flattering them, and to greasing the skids in preparation for the day the "good neighbor" wishes to push Cambodia actively into the satellite orbit.

While the aid programs are the most spectacular, the trade agreements may be more dangerous for Cambodia in the long-run. Cambodia's exports are low-quality basic products which find difficulty in selling on western markets, with the exception of rubber. For these products to move, they must have either special incentives given by the Cambodian Government or importing countries (such as France), or be the subject of bilateral trade agreements such as those carried on by the Communist bloc. At present the former situation obtains, but if these export incentives are removed, increasing trade with the Communist bloc is a distinct possibility, and the trade agreements which at present are dead letters may suddenly take on great importance. This indicates the importance of emphasizing in our economic aid program the development of improved diversified production to enable Cambodia to export competitively.

[Here follows the body of the summary which is included in the microfiche supplement.]

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71. Editorial Note

On June 25, Premier Sim Var charged in a proclamation that South Vietnamese troops had penetrated at least 4.3 miles into northeastern Cambodia on June 18, occupying the town of Phak Nhay. Sim Var also stated that Vietnamese troops continued to occupy Cambodian territory and were organizing for a deeper attack into Cambodia. The South Vietnamese Government claimed no knowledge of this incident and requested information from local authorities in the

remote and sparsely populated area of South Vietnam contiguous to the Cambodian border where the incident occurred. The Embassy reported that Sim Var had appealed to the United States to intervene and obtain the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. If U.S. help was not forthcoming, Sim Var threatened to appeal to other friendly powers, possibly even China.

According to the Embassy in Phnom Penh, the Cambodians appeared dangerously excited and Sim Var, whose government had been defeated on June 21 on a vote on rice imports and frontier relations with Thailand and Burma, was perhaps using the alleged Vietnamese threat as a means of regaining lost face. As the Director of Intelligence and Research, Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., informed Secretary Herter, Vietnamese-Cambodian relations had deteriorated seriously in recent weeks and the border area, never clearly delimited, had seen recent previous incidents. (Memorandum from Cumming to Herter, June 25; Department of State, INR Files: Lot 58 D 776, 1957–58 Intelligence Notes; included in the microfiche supplement)

In a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs John N. Irwin II, June 26, the Regional Director of ISA stated that the June 25 incident appeared to be caused by a raid by Viet Cong from Cambodia to rescue a group of prisoners held in South Vietnam. The raiders released 92 prisoners and returned with them to Cambodia with South Vietnamese troops. The Vietnamese did not make contact with the raiders, but they probably crossed the ill-defined border. Regional Director Captain B.A. Robbins suggested that "it was most unlikely that Viet-Nam has consciously invaded Cambodia for should this happen Cambodia would be overrun in about 72 hours." (Washington National Records Center, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698, 092 Cambodia; included in the microfiche supplement)

72. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, July 1, 1958—1 p.m.

2. Phnom Penh 1348 rptd info Saigon 398, CINCPAC POLAD 94[2] and subsequent Phnom Penh and Saigon telegrams same subject.

1. US believes direct involvement current Cambodian–GVN dispute re alleged invasion unwise since motive of RKG request still unclear, RKG and GVN statement re facts are conflicting and only one country has requested such involvement.

2. Embassy Phnom Penh should inform Cambodians that in view Lon Nol press conference statement Vietnamese forces already withdrawn from Cambodia and since ICC investigation team already on spot, Department sees little it can contribute through US-Cambodian-Vietnamese commission of investigation. Nevertheless we remain interested in helping improve relations between Cambodia and Vietnam.

3. Both Embassies Phnom Penh and Saigon at appropriate moment should approach respective governments along lines para. 1 Deptel 2415 Saigon rptd Phnom Penh 887.[3] They should continue inform officials both governments that US as friend believes necessary first step in improvement relations is cessation campaign recriminations through official press releases and statements and curbing of more virulent press articles. Following such cooling off period, we believe there are certain specific issues which could be negotiated by two governments such as financial settlement followed by border delimitation and treatment minorities. Embassy Saigon as suggested in

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/6–2758. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Price, cleared by SEA, and approved by Robertson. Also sent priority to Saigon and repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In this telegram, June 27, Ambassador Strom reported that he had told Foreign Minister Troung Cang on the afternoon of June 26 that he had no instructions on the Cambodian request for U.S. assistance in the dispute with South Vietnam. Strom told Troung that it was doubtful there was an ARVN incursion, but in any case, South Vietnam had ordered its forces to withdraw. (*Ibid.*)

[3] In paragraph 1 of this telegram, June 6, the Department instructed the Embassies in Saigon and Phnom Penh to urge at the highest levels that both countries avoid action that might cause strained relations and search for ways to improve them. The telegram reads: "Vietnamese should not forget that one motivation for Cambodian neutrality policy and one which carried Cambodia dangerously close to accommodation to international communism is long-standing animosity with Vietnam. It is certainly to Vietnam's own interest not to increase this animosity. At same time, Cambodia's own self-interest from economic and general free world security viewpoints in maintaining good working relations with neighbor should be mentioned in order attempt avoid incidents for which Cambodia responsible." (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/6–658)

Embtel 2580[4] should take initiative at appropriate moment in suggesting meeting on financial settlement.

4. FYI. When specific issues such as above are being discussed US Government in response to requests would be willing offer opinion both sides but would wish avoid becoming active mediator.

Department also wishes avoid danger both governments lean too heavily on US to attempt to settle disputes rather than taking action directly with other government to reduce tension. In addition, Cambodia seems believe US has more influence with GVN than is actually case. In contacts with RKG Embassy officers should continue point out that GVN is independent and takes action over which US has no influence. End FYI.

Dulles

[4] In telegram 2580, June 26, the Embassy in Saigon reported that the MAAG Chiefs in Saigon and Phnom Penh had concluded that the Vietnamese incursion was probably a minor foray in pursuit of Viet Minh former prisoners. Durbrow concluded that his best role was to press for calm in Saigon and urge that Vietnam and Cambodia resume efforts to reach settlement of their outstanding financial differences. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/6–2658)

73. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, July 7, 1958—5 p.m.

30. It is difficult to sort out the many things that have happened last few days but one fact seems to emerge prominently, namely, that Cambodia is at a crossroads. I am convinced Sihanouk has wanted and still wants a solution of his problems with Vietnam through the instrumentality of Western powers. Considerable evidence is accumulating that he is playing with the idea of support of some kind from Red China but I am still sure he believes that Cambodia's true friends are in the West and that a closer approach to Communist bloc would be basically distasteful to him.

However, Sihanouk feels put upon and abandoned. He believes that Cambodia's Western friends have been indifferent in his time of trouble. In speech at Kompong Cham July 5 he said "For our tranquility we ought to choose a great ally who is not too far from us and who is ready to aid us. I do not mean that we want an ally as in the time of

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/7–758. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Saigon, London, Paris, CINCPAC for POLAD, Bangkok, and Vientiane.

the protectorate. I do not think we ought to go as far as that. Our peaceful means have not yet been exhausted. On the other hand we should not hesitate to find flesh-and-bones ally to prepare ourselves against every eventuality".

Later in speech he complains bitterly request for help addressed to US of no avail. "While RKG has asked US to go to verify facts on the spot, US contents itself to say, of what use? The incident is closed as has been established. The free world insults us and we are to blame but it refuses to verify our charges. How can they say we are guilty if they refuse to check? The US considered my meeting with Diem a good idea but sensing that this meeting might bear fruit and that new violations might not recur they pushed the (Vietnamese) newspapers and the members of the government to oppose the meeting. These acts wound us but do not discourage us. The basic means of our neutrality are not exhausted. If they were we would be obliged to seize whatever means there might be at our command in order to live".

The solution of this problem would clearly seem to be settlement between Cambodia and Vietnam. This is desired by all the Western powers represented here, US, UK, France and Australia, and certainly by Cambodia. Sihanouk seemed to have removed the greatest difficulty, namely the question of who should make the first approach, by volunteering to go to Saigon. However, after having been told he would be received, whole project fell through as result bitter and vicious attack on Sihanouk in semi-official *Vietnam Presse* July 3.[2] GVN Foreign Minister issued official communiqué July 6 whose first paragraph was mollifying in tone but which in its effect did not improve situation (Saigon's 31 to Department).[3]

I have twice recommended US intervene in strong and unequivocal fashion with GVN to require them to settle their difficulties with Cambodia.[4] Department has replied that US cannot tell GVN what to do.[5] However, in absence firm action by US, GVN has acted and, in effect, established policy for West vis-à-vis Cambodia which is exactly contrary to policy desired by all Western powers represented here. Even if negotiations can be rescheduled, they will not succeed unless Diem can be persuaded GVN's self-interest makes success desirable. I

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[2] According to telegram 39 from Saigon, the article was entitled, "A Ninny's Policy." (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/7–758) This article was followed on July 4 by a *Times of Viet-Nam* piece entitled, "What Is Sihanouk Up To," possibly written by Ngo Dinh Nhu, that while not "inflammatory" was "disobligingly blunt." (Telegram 29 from Saigon, July 5; *ibid.*, 751H.11/7–558)

[3] This telegram, July 6, contained a summary of the official Vietnamese communiqué of July 6. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/7–658)

[4] In telegrams 1312 and 1338 from Phnom Penh, June 20 and 25. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/6–2058 and 651G.51H/6–2558)

[5] See *supra*.

do not believe we have any choice except to present matter to Diem as vital to his own interest and to that of West and to insist on negotiations with Cambodia in good faith.

Strom

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74. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, July 9, 1958—7 p.m.

60. Following are my considered comments on Phnom Penh's telegram 30[2] as requested by Deptel 36.[3]

From here Cambodia does not appear to be at crossroads but rather somewhat past that point along road to left. Sihanouk has already recognized USSR and accepted Soviet aid and for most practical purposes has also recognized Communist China by accepting trade mission and considerable ChiCom aid. Moreover, evidence from Phnom Penh, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] appears to indicate Sihanouk may be moving closer to Communist China, although of course this could well be bluff. Under these circumstances, I translate Sihanouk's talk about "pure" neutrality and "active" neutrality as nothing more than "pure" opportunism or smokescreen (see Phnom Penh's telegram 27 numbered paragraph 5).[4]

To me Sihanouk's talk about friends and allies in his July 5 speech is nothing but a part of smokescreen or crude blackmail attempt and his remarks accusing us of sabotaging his meeting with Diem are insulting and call for very sharp protest.

Although I have repeatedly urged Diem and other GVN officials to exercise restraint and moderation in dealing with Cambodia and they have not been helpful, particularly in July 3 and 4 press articles, I have personal conviction that Sihanouk for whatever motives he may have has deliberately elected to exacerbate Cambodian-Vietnamese relations and that time has clearly come for us to call his bluff.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/7–958. Secret; Priority. Also sent to Phnom Penh and repeated to London, CINCPAC, Paris, Bangkok, and Vientiane.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Dated July 7. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/7–558)

[4] In paragraph 5 of telegram 27, July 7, Strom commented on Sihanouk's vision of neutrality which Strom thought derived from Cambodia's weak position in Southeast Asia. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/7–758)

I believe we should tell Sihanouk:

(1) We are interested in seeing the restoration of good relations between Cambodia and Vietnam;
(2) We believe this can be achieved by restraint and good will on both sides;
(3) We believe invasion flap was largely artificial and incident should be considered closed;
(4) We must reject accusation that US sought to torpedo Sihanouk–Diem meeting which we still consider desirable. Whether it be Sihanouk–Diem or under present circumstances it might be best to press for technical talks which if successful could lead to Sihanouk–Diem meeting to "bury the hatchet";
(5) If Cambodia wants to turn increasingly to Communist China that is her privilege but RKG must not expect us to enter bidding contest with Communists but rather must expect that US would be obliged to re-examine its aid policy. We should also talk to Diem firmly along lines 1, 2 and 4 above.[5]

If, as may be case, Sihanouk is drifting more and more towards Communist China any efforts to appease him will only encourage him in his game of playing both ends against the middle. On the other hand if we bring him up abruptly I think we have a good chance of making him face situation with greater realism.

Durbrow

[5] In telegram 58 to Saigon, also sent to Phnom Penh as telegram 35, July 10, the Department asked Durbrow to speak to Diem along points (1), (2), and (4), with a view to discovering if Diem desired a negotiated settlement to differences with Cambodia. Strom was instructed to make points (1) through (4) to Sihanouk and others and to raise point (5) without the appearance of a threat. When making point (5), Strom could point out that alignment with China would result in much more than just a reduction of U.S. aid to Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/7–958)

75. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, July 10, 1958—9:47 p.m.

36. Ambassador from Parsons. Your 56.[2] I have read with growing concern series messages reporting critical situation in Cambodia. Essence of your analysis appears to be that unless U.S. succeeds in somehow bringing Diem to resolve problems with Sihanouk latter will conclude and may already have concluded that Cambodia no longer enjoys friendship of U.S. In these circumstances it must seek protection from Viet-Nam by turning to Communist China. To meet this crisis you urge that we bring to end disastrously different policies (dichotomy) of U.S. and Viet-Nam towards Cambodia. In view urgency this problem and danger Sihanouk may move at any moment you [should?] request Niact instructions and suggest it would be evidence of American interest and satisfy Sihanouk if Assistant Secretary Robertson could visit Southeast Asia and resolve "U.S. and Viet-Nam policy" on spot.

Mr. Robertson on leave and it impracticable to study problem with him in time to help you at this juncture. Apart from merit suggestion, I personally consider it out of question to hope for visit from him now.

With reference first para reftel I am astounded at report Sihanouk tended believe U.S. would not want talks between himself and Diem; that U.S. had induced Diem create obstacles to talks and that we attempting bully him with threat of reducing aid. This is precise opposite of what you have told him. You may if you wish reiterate under instructions that we desire see negotiations started, we hope for reduction of tensions and have never sought place obstacles in way Cambodia–Viet-Nam friendship. Such would be clearly contrary U.S. interests. It difficult know how to remove "dichotomy" in U.S. and Viet-Nam policy towards Cambodia. We cannot require Diem to do what

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/7–1058. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Parsons.

[2] In telegram 56, July 10, Strom reported reliable information that Sihanouk did not believe the United States wanted conversations between himself and Diem and in fact was trying to place obstacles in the way of those negotiations. Strom reported that a reliable Cambodian source indicated that Cambodia was definitely planning to upgrade its relations with China. In addition, Strom disagreed with the contention of the Embassy in Saigon that Cambodia's complaints against the Diem regime were either a smokescreen or blackmail. Strom considered that Cambodia had legitimate grievances against South Vietnam and clearly Diem did not want a settlement. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

we wish. Sihanouk should understand that in contrast to Soviet and Chinese Communists we have friends and allies but not puppets. If our failure somehow to impose on Viet-Nam what he wants should lead him to turn for military treaty to regime which has just applauded murder of Hungarian freedom fighters and which has condemned more stridently than any other Communist regime Yugoslavia's efforts to maintain independent national existence I do not see what we can do to stop them. Reduction of U.S. aid in such circumstances would probably be one of lesser consequences. He would bear heavy responsibility for increasing tensions in Southeast Asia and jeopardizing not only safety his own country but also of neighbors powerless to restrain his first steps at least in this direction.

Recent months have indeed been full of Sihanouk's condemnation of Communists. Going back further Communists who flatter him at moment have at other times insulted him as he might do well to remember. For these reasons, while not disputing reality of crisis we find it difficult believe he would actually conclude military assistance treaty which might not only place ChiComs in dominating position vis-à-vis Cambodia but also damage Sihanouk's reputation all over free world.

You best judge of how to talk to Sihanouk at this time. We desire see him negotiate with Vietnamese and if Durbrow can get statements from Diem that he would like to negotiate this might be helpful. Department reports indicate measure of fault and at times lack of restraint both sides. This not unusual between neighbors (i.e., India and Pakistan) with deep-seated antagonisms but U.S. must seek remain friend of both parties not partisan of just one. U.S. in my view will support any orderly approach to settlement but there is nothing of dramatic nature which we can ask you to tell Sihanouk. Any suggestions you may have will be immediately considered. We have given thought to proposing to the Secretary on his return that he send friendly message to Sihanouk on resumption of Premiership and if you think this has value would welcome suggested draft.

We also note your statement immediate need is to re-establish Cambodia's confidence in good faith of U.S. Would appreciate your further suggestions this regard. Would also help if you could identify specific instances in which we are accused of bad faith.

Your 55[3] just received and I agree failure Canadians participate in ICC report might be interpreted in Sihanouk's present mood as reluc-

[3] In telegram 55, July 10, the Embassy in Phnom Penh reported that its sources indicated that the ICC investigating team, which had made a fact-finding trip to the disputed Vietnamese-Cambodian border, was convinced that there had been a Vietnamese incursion into Cambodian territory. The Embassy therefore suggested that the United States should desist from attempting to persuade the Canadian Government from withdrawing from the ICC fact-finding mission. The danger, the Embassy be-

Continued

tance Western nations share in findings damaging to Viet-Nam. Despite fact we agree with Canada's view ICC not properly concerned with Cambodian-Vietnamese border dispute we will discuss problem with Canadians at once.

Herter

lieved, was that Cambodians would be given the impression that the United States was opposing Canadian participation on the grounds of the ICC team's findings and not on the grounds of the ICC's competence to handle the matter. (Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/7–1058)

76. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, July 21, 1958—8:22 p.m.

69. Your 106.[2] You should seek immediate appointment Sihanouk and referring to persistent reports from several sources RKG diplomatic recognition Red China ask him whether reports correct. If he fails deny, you should express this Government's concern, drawing once again on such portions Deptel 36[3] as you desire. You should in addition remind Sihanouk decision affects whole area Southeast Asia and is of concern to all his neighbors as well as friends elsewhere, including US. You should add that we fear his action would foreclose possibility early settlement Cambodia–Viet-Nam border and other outstanding problems. Viet-Nam has had to fight for its life against Communists to north and Diem who has faced great odds in past could hardly be expected to come to terms with Cambodia just after latter's recognition its mortal enemy.

If subsequent this conversation you believe Sihanouk persisting in decision to recognize you should seek audience with King and Queen to insure US viewpoint thoroughly understood at Palace. We leave to

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 793.02/7–2158. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons, cleared by SEA, and approved by Robertson. Repeated niact to Saigon, priority to CINCPAC for POLAD, and to Bangkok, Vientiane, Hong Kong, and Taipei.

[2] In telegram 106, July 21, Strom reported he had asked to see Sihanouk urgently in an attempt to "head off" Cambodian recognition of the People's Republic of China. He noted that rumors abounded in Phnom Penh of the imminent recognition of China. (*Ibid.*)

[3] *Supra.*

your discretion extent to which you should also inform other leading Cambodians.[4]

If you are queried as to what steps US will take in event Cambodian recognition ChiComs you should state that in view gravity this problem and repercussions for area in general, US will not precipitate action without considering all relevant factors. US thoroughly conversant with and fully understands Cambodia's policy of neutrality and has no desire interfere in policy of genuine neutrality which Cambodia considers calculated preserve its independence. Recognition ChiComs at this time appears step away from such neutrality and likely create new controversy without settling old ones in which Cambodia involved with neighbors.

Department will consider possibility consultation depending on developments but inclined believe value your presence Phnom Penh likely be overriding.

Dulles

[4] According to telegram 117 from Phnom Penh, July 22, Sihanouk announced during his Kampot speech of July 21 before the Cabinet, half of the National Assembly, and 1,000 local residents, that Cambodia would recognize China. (Department of State, Central Files, 793.03/7–2258) In light of this information, the Department instructed the Embassy in Phnom Penh, in telegram 73 to Phnom Penh, July 22, to cancel the meeting with Sihanouk. "Appears here nothing can be gained by providing Sihanouk opportunity expound RKG recognition Red China at meeting you requested in effort prevent such action." (*Ibid.*, 793.02/7–2258)

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77. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, July 25, 1958—4 p.m.

127. Department pass Defense. CINCPAC for POLAD. I saw Sihanouk 8:30 today, two hours after radio announcement recognition Red China.[2] Penn Nouth, DCM also present. (Cambodia and Chinese notes on recognition dated July 18 and 19 respectively.)

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 793.02/7–2458. Confidential; Priority. Repeated priority to Saigon and CINCPAC, to Taipei, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Vientiane, Tokyo, London, and Paris.

[2] Robertson discussed Cambodian recognition of China with Ambassador Nong Kimny on July 25 in Washington. (*Ibid.*, 793.02/7–2558; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. After reference announcement I said Department had been concerned some time over developments Cambodia; that I had been invited proceed Washington; that I would leave 27 or 28. I continued that for two years there has been sharp policy difference between US and Cambodia, US recognizing danger of new colonialism represented by Soviet and Chinese expansionism to newly independent nations that are determined to maintain their independence, while Cambodia had chosen position neutrality. I enumerated victims this colonialism. In spite substantial assistance US has given Cambodia it has never attempted force Cambodia adopt its point of view but has respected RKG choice neutrality policy. US had believed neutral position between two opposing blocs, particularly as regards recognition divided countries, was an essential feature Cambodian neutrality. Recognition Red China was to us important departure from policy long held, particularly since Cambodians had stressed it as, for example, Monseigneur himself in his article in this month's issue of *Foreign Affairs.*

2. Sihanouk said there had been three factors in recognition decision:

(A) China is great country nearby and a reality; he said he understood our attitude on Taiwan and in particular its strategic importance to Western position but to Cambodia Taiwan was only a small island and mainland China is actually China; that Korea and Vietnam were truly divided but he did not consider China really a divided country; that he should have recognized Red China two years ago and it had been under consideration since Bandung and his visit to Peiping.

(B) He had delayed action on recognition two years since Cambodia was located between two countries committed to West and he had not wanted antagonize West, but when speaking of policy on divided countries he had never indicated that it was necessarily a permanent policy that would not be affected by events.

(C) Policy followed last two years had proved unsuccessful.

Cambodia had been criticized by everyone, particularly by "SEATO-ists" and seemed have no friends. At this point I pointed out Vietnam was not member SEATO, that he had initiated rapprochement with Thailand and there was no possible evidence that any remaining SEATO members were not his friends. He merely smiled and continued, saying, in particular, continued aggression on part RVN has led to demand on part all Cambodians for change. Ban Pak Nhay was merely "drop which made vessel overflow." Despite fact French-defined boundary had been drawn in favor Vietnam, nevertheless Vietnamese had continued their efforts to take bits Cambodian territory. There had also been instances of interference inside Cambodia. He made it clear it was Vietnamese attitude over last two years which had caused change in policy on divided countries.

3. I said recognition was not fait accompli. Our policy of support for Cambodia, for monarchy, and for throne had been based on belief Cambodia, in spite policy neutrality, had sincere desire maintain its independence. I asked what the future held in this respect and whether or not effect of RKG action on Chinese community would not seriously limit Cambodia's ability resist Communist subversion and maintain its independence. I pointed out that there has been a balance between pro-Communist and non-Communist elements in Chinese community; that recognition will strengthen pro-Communist elements and greatly discourage non-Communists; that it will further limit ability RKG continue its efforts control Communist teaching in Chinese schools particularly as regards use Communist text books and employment Communist teachers.

Hitherto there has been a Chinese Communist and a non-Communist [press]. Chinese Communist press has engaged continuously in violent polemics against West. I asked if we could not expect now to see stepped-up attacks against Western position not only in Chinese Communist press but also in Vietnamese.

4. As for Chinese community, Sihanouk said it was 99% in favor Peiping, only rich Chinese favoring Taipei.

As for schools, he said government recognized necessity preventing all external political maneuvers in country and Penn Nouth said that they had a plan for controlling Communist teaching. As for press, he said, "I could issue a decree banning all polemics" and although he repeated this to me as if to ask me if he should, I made no reply. I went on to say that Communist influence extended even to Official Press Bulletin. I reminded Penn Nouth that I had spoken to him about this matter twice during 1957 and he agreed; I added I had taken it up several times with Sim Var but no improvement had been noted excepting during period 3 months when Pung Peng Cheng was Secretary State for Information (and Penn Nouth was Prime Minister). Excepting for this time, I said AKP had had strong Communist slant. I referred specifically to quotes of Hanoi and Peiping broadcasts in *Official Press Bulletin* for which headlines are supplied by Ministry itself, invariably picking up Communist line of text and thereby adopting this line as line of Royal Government. I showed Sihanouk several recent examples and spoke with some emphasis and bitterness on this point saying that excepting for period Pung Pear Heng was in charge there had been much evidence of strong Communist influence in this Ministry. In one of examples shown, Americans are referred to as imperialists. I objected strenuously to such characterization US in headline in *Official Press Bulletin.* Penn Nouth tried twice during this conversation to interject belittling remarks, that journalists have their own slants, etc., etc., but Sihanouk did not buy this and gave me categoric assurance that he would not evade his responsibility in this

matter. He said that from this afternoon on I would no longer see US treated this way in AKP and if I did I should bring it to his personal attention.

I next said there were other features of the Chinese situation which interested me: For example, had consideration been given to future of Bank of China. Sihanouk said that they had not thought of this yet but that position of bank would remain unchanged. Penn Nouth interrupted to say that this was a technical question which would have to be investigated and on which the advice of Governor of Bank of Cambodia and Ministry Finance would have to be obtained and Sihanouk deferred to him. It was clear no decision has been made on bank and for at least short time there will be no change.

I next said I had had strong conviction during my service in Cambodia that rapprochement between Cambodia and Vietnam was an absolute necessity; that I believed that it was even more necessary now than it had ever been; that I had been very much distressed by breakdown his own démarche but encouraged again by report Nhu was planning visit Phnom Penh. I asked him if he still expected Nhu.

Sihanouk replied he had ordered Cambodian representative in Saigon to approach Nhu to assure him he would be welcomed warmly as guest of Palace if he came to Cambodia and Nhu had replied that he would give five days notice of his plans.

At end this part discussion Prince reiterated that, despite US view, no Cambodian would ever believe Chinese were more dangerous than Vietnamese.

I remarked that I should like to have audience with King and Queen to take leave of them before departing for US and Sihanouk asked Penn Nouth to arrange it. I have received appointment for 5:30 26th.[3]

Strom

[3] Strom reported on his audience in telegram 144 from Phnom Penh, July 27. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/7–2758)

78. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, August 5, 1958[1]

SUBJECT

Cambodian Recognition of Communist China

PARTICIPANTS

Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
J. Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
Carl W. Strom, Ambassador to Cambodia
Brig. General Hartshorn, Chief of MAAG, Viet-Nam
Alvin Roseman, Chief of USOM, Viet-Nam
Capt. B.A. Robbins, USN, Regional Director, Far East, OASD/ISA
Gardner E. Palmer, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Economic Affairs
Eric Kocher, SEA
Alfred le S. Jenkins, SEA
Joseph A. Mendenhall, SEA

The purpose of the meeting was to examine Cambodian recognition of Communist China, its consequences and the U.S. response to this action.

Reason for Recognition. Mr. Robertson noted that Sihanouk had stated that recognition had been under consideration for two years. He said that he personally did not accept the view that the recent border incident between Cambodia and Viet-Nam had led to recognition. Ambassador Strom said that the Cambodians considered the Vietnamese, not the Chinese, as their great enemy, and that he believed that the series of incidents between Cambodia and Viet-Nam triggered recognition at this time.

Importance of Cambodia. General Hartshorn said that CINCPAC considered Cambodia as the hub of the wheel in Southeast Asia in view of its location south of Laos and on the flanks of Viet-Nam and Thailand. Mr. Robertson asked Captain Robbins about the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the strategic significance of Cambodia. Captain Robbins replied that there has been no formal expression by the Joint Chiefs, but one of them had recently expressed informally a view identical with that of CINCPAC's.

U.S. Assets In Cambodia. Ambassador Strom and General Hartshorn agreed that the Army, which has been considered the best anti-Communist asset in Cambodia, is loyal to the throne and to Sihanouk and would follow wherever Sihanouk led. Mr. Robertson asked whether there was any awareness in the Army of the Communist threat, to which General Hartshorn replied that in general he thought there was no real recognition of the danger. Ambassador Strom and

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 793.02/8–558. Secret. Drafted by Mendenhall on August 8 and cleared by Kocher and Robertson.

Mr. Roseman listed the following as U.S. assets: (1) [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] had sent a message to the Ambassador after recognition of Red China that he was loyal to the monarchy and to Sihanouk, but that he was a patriot above all and loved his country more than either of these.[2] [*1 line of source text not declassified*] (2) A middle level governmental official informed Ambassador Strom at a secret meeting just before the latter's departure from Phnom Penh that an anti-Communist group had just been formed among young government officials who desire American assistance for their program. (3) Cambodian business men opposed to the Communists also represent an asset. (4) The police administration, in which we are involved in depth with our aid program, is also an asset, but in a show-down its loyalty to Sihanouk might prove superior to anything else.

Ambassador Strom stressed that he does not agree with President Diem that there is any serious opposition to Sihanouk within Cambodia.

U.S. Aid to Cambodia. Ambassador Strom's view was that the U.S. should not eliminiate or reduce its military or economic aid to "punish" Cambodia. We should proceed with the substantial reductions already contemplated on economic grounds, but should continue to support Cambodia's military forces and economic development on a gradually declining basis so long as Cambodia in fact maintains its independence and does not begin to act like a Communist satellite. Mr. Roseman explained that it had already been planned to cut military budget support by 10% a year for the next five years, and, after the completion of the big investment projects in the program this year and next year, to cut back economic assistance to about $5 million per year, largely in technical assistance. He noted one possible new capital project is under discussion—a technical high school. He felt that the possibility for politically motivated cuts did not really exist, since a cut of $1 or $2 million would simply cause projects to be shifted to the Communist aid program. General Hartshorn said that CINCPAC believes that Cambodia should be given a warning which would consist of notification that the aid program is being re-examined and that we are carefully observing Sihanouk's course following the recognition of Communist China. CINCPAC considers this necessary because of Cambodia's neighbors who are watching the U.S. reaction to this development. CINCPAC further believes that if there is any cut in military assistance—which it would prefer to avoid—the reduction should be in hardware, and not in force maintenance items. In this connection, General Hartshorn stated that the Cambodians generally do not know what is in the projected FY 59 Military Aid Program.

[2] Reported in telegram 139 from Phnom Penh, July 26. (*Ibid.*, 793.02/7–2658)

Mr. Robertson summarized the Country Team position as being that, to the extent possible in light of appropriations, the U.S. should carry on its aid program in FY 59 as it has in FY 58. He said that we are all agreed that we should not terminate our aid program as a result of the recognition action since that would mean abandoning Cambodia to the Communists. He also noted that Sihanouk would not live forever. He said that we are all agreed that we should not now decide on changes in our aid programs in Cambodia for political reasons, but should allow the normal process of reductions because of appropriations and pre-existing Country Team's plans to take place. He added that it may be necessary to re-examine this question on the basis of the results of Sihanouk's visit to Peiping.[3]

[3] This course of action was sent as a policy instruction in circular telegram 150, August 11. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5–MSP/8–1158)

79. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Jenkins) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, August 21, 1958.

SUBJECT

Coup Possibilities in Cambodia

Ambassador Strom reports (Telegram 239)[2] that any contacts with the Thais by Dap Chhuon are more in the nature of feelers and indicate no present action is planned. Other reports that we have received on the above subject seem to bear out Ambassador Strom's report. Therefore, as stated in our memo to you on August 12,[3] we remain doubtful that a serious coup effort is being planned in Cambodia.

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Coup (1958) 14.5. Secret. Drafted by Price and cleared by Mendenhall and Parsons.

[2] Dated August 19. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.00W/8–1959)

[3] In this memorandum to Robertson, Kocher described three reports of a possible coup in Cambodia, in which Dap Chhuon's name appeared in all three. Kocher was doubtful that Dap Chhuon was planning a serious coup, noting that he had no following beyond the 3,000 men under his command in Siem Riep province and was extremely ill and not expected to live more than 2 years. (*Ibid.*, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Coup (1958) 14.5)

[3 *lines of source text not declassified*] Dap Chhuon has been mentioned for several years as a possible leader of a coup, but [½ *line of source text not declassified*] he is still far from certain what course he should follow. You will recall that two years ago he was talking treason [1½ *lines of source text not declassified*] but shortly thereafter Dap Chhuon visited Sihanouk in France and swore loyalty to Sihanouk.

Others mentioned as possible leaders of a coup, together with our thumbnail evaluation of them, are as follows:

Lon Nol, Chief of Staff of the Cambodian armed forces, who owes his present position to Sihanouk and the Royal Family.

Sam Sary, recalled from his post as Ambassador to Great Britain in disgrace after beating a young Cambodian girl ostensibly employed as a nursemaid in Sam Sary's household, but actually Sam Sary's wife number three. He has little known popular support.

Yem Sambaur, former Prime Minister who retired to a job in the National Library after differences with Sihanouk. He is a good man, but with his retirement from the political scene the small following he had has diminished even further.

Prince Monireth, uncle of Sihanouk and brother of the Queen. He combines the qualities of a major in the French Foreign Legion (which he was) and an oriental despot (which he would like to have been). He is not popular in Cambodia, especially among the military.

Son Ngoc Thanh, first post-World War II prime minister and perennial dissident. For several years he was in the "bush" in Northwest Cambodia, and was finally driven into exile in Thailand. In 1954 he was a real force in Cambodia and had a considerable following, especially among the elite. Much of his following has now disappeared. He has received aid from both the Thai and Vietnamese (Tabs B and C).[4] Sihanouk hates him intensely and considers him the number one traitor in Cambodia.

A [2 *lines of source text not declassified*] (Tab D).

[4] Tabs A–D not found attached and not further identified.

80. Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (McElroy)[1]

Washington, August 22, 1958.

SUBJECT

U.S. Actions with Respect to Cambodia (U)

1. Cambodian recognition of Communist China points to the necessity for specific new actions to arrest a Cambodian drift toward a position more vulnerable to Communist subversion and/or domination. Having now gained diplomatic status in Cambodia, the Peking regime may be expected, if an opportunity is presented to them, to exploit this advantage in order to introduce a military mission into Cambodia. In order to safeguard and strengthen the present United States position in Cambodia, the U.S. must obviously indicate to Cambodia and its neighbors our displeasure over that country's recognition of Communist China. However, the means taken to indicate such displeasure must not operate to present the Communists with an opportunity to expand their influence in fields of security significance. U.S. interests can best be protected by our remaining as long as possible in a position to influence the forces upon which Prince Sihanouk must eventually depend to take action to prevent further Communist encroachments in Cambodia.

2. Although the military in Cambodia have not demonstrated much interest in political affairs to date, they do offer our best hope for an anti-Communist stabilizing force if the political drift to the left continues. Therefore, the U.S. must seek further to improve U.S.-Cambodian military relationships rather than risk the sudden loss of hard-earned gains by withdrawing from them.

3. In view of the above considerations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the Secretary of Defense propose the following U.S. courses of action for the concurrence of the Department of State.

a. Inform Prince Sihanouk that the U.S. is compelled by his action in recognizing Communist China, to consider that future U.S. aid programs must be related to the direction in which Cambodia moves.

b. In considering any future U.S. aid reappraisals, consider cuts in the economic field along with any reductions in military programs. If, in addition to appropriate economic items, some military cuts must be made, these should not be maintenance items or projects which could cause retrogression of U.S. influence or Cambodian capabilities in the military field. In respect to economic cuts, highest priority for retention should be given to education, police and communications aid programs.

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[1] Source: National Archives and Records Administration, JCS Records, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48 (2)). Secret.

c. Explain generally and confidentially to appropriate governmental officials of other friendly Southeast Asian countries U.S. actions in reappraising U.S. Cambodian Aid Programs.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
N.F. Twining[2]
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

81. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) [1]

Washington, September 3, 1958.

SUBJECT

Results of Sihanouk's Trip to Communist China [2]

For Secretary's Staff Meeting [3]

Ambassador Strom has reported in Phnom Penh's 302, September 3, [4] on a talk with Sihanouk following his return from Communist China:

Sihanouk said the CHICOMs had offered both military aid and additional economic aid. He told the CHICOMs he was satisfied with present military aid from the U.S. and France, and could not accept

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Sihanouk Visit to U.S., 22.2, 1958. Confidential. Drafted by Mendenhall.

[2] Sihanouk made an extended visit to China August 14–27, where he met with Mao Tse-tung for 6 hours on August 15 and 16 and with Chou En-lai beginning on August 17 and continuing throughout the rest of his visit. In addition, Sihanouk visited India August 11–12, where he met with Prime Minister Nehru, and Burma on August 13, where he talked with Prime Minister U Nu. Summary reports of Sihanouk's trips to India and Burma are in despatches 278 from New Delhi, September 2, and 106 from Rangoon, August 21. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 033.51H91/9–258 and 033.51H90B/8–2158, respectively) Documentation on U.S. interest in the Sihanouk trip to China is *ibid.*, Central Files 793.02 and 751H.11.

[3] According to the notes of the Secretary's Staff Meetings for early September, Sihanouk's visit to China was never discussed. (*Ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

[4] Not printed. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.11/9–358)

such aid from both sides. He accepted an offer equivalent to $5.6 million for additional economic aid. (Added to existing economic aid of $22.4 million, CHICOM aid to Cambodia will total $28 million.)

Sihanouk told Strom no changes in Cambodian policy would result from the visit to Communist China. Strom remarked, however, that Cambodia's announcement of support for admission of Red China to the UN represented a change.

Sihanouk said he talked to Chou En-lai about relations with the U.S. Chou said there is no basic reason for antagonism and the only real problem is Taiwan. Sihanouk implied that he intended to discuss this conversation when he comes to Washington.[5]

Sihanouk expressed a desire for early liquidation of the border marker problem with Viet-Nam, preferably before he leaves for the UNGA on September 8. He added other problems could be discussed leisurely over several months or a year. (*Comment:* The GVN has offered to remove the marker if the local RKG military commander will consent thereto and witness its removal. The GVN has also offered to take part in a joint commission with the RKG to work out the exact location of the marker.[6] The next move, therefore, seems to be up to Cambodia.)

[5] Apparent reference to an offer of mediation by Sihanouk to settle the off-shore islands confrontation between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

[6] Reported in telegram 337 from Saigon, August 24. (Department of State, Central Files, 751G.11/8–2458)

82. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Sprague)[1]

Washington, September 26, 1958.

DEAR MANNY: With reference to our letter of September 9, 1958[2] concerning U.S. aid to Cambodia, a reappraisal of U.S. aid policy for that country was, as you know, conducted following Cambodian rec-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5–MSP/9–2658. Secret. Drafted by Mendenhall and cleared by SEA, FE, and W/MSC.

[2] In this letter, Sprague suggested that any future reductions in aid to Cambodia should be in economic as well as military assistance. He also suggested that aid cuts should not be in maintenance items or projects which could cause retrogression of U.S. influence on the Cambodian military. (*Ibid.*, FE Files: Lot 60 D 90, Sprague; included in the microfiche supplement)

ognition of Communist China. Ambassador Strom and the Chiefs of MAAG and USOM were recalled to Washington for this purpose, and a Defense representative also participated in the review. As a result of this reappraisal, it was decided that the U.S. should continue its program of military and economic aid in Cambodia, subject to (1) availability of funds and (2) the nature of future developments in that country. The Cambodian Government was informed of this decision.

There have been no further developments in Cambodian policy which would warrant a further reappraisal of our aid program. However, no Congressional action in the meantime has resulted in a lower level of Defense Support appropriations than that requested by the Executive Branch, it has become necessary to reduce Defense Support aid in Cambodia in FY 59 below the level prevailing in FY 58. The amount to be granted in FY 59 is still under review in this Department. While we agree with the Defense Department that the Army offers the best hope as an anti-Communist force in Cambodia, the military budget will undoubtedly have to absorb part of the reduced level of aid. However, we believe our relations with the Cambodian Government will be better served if we permit it to take the initiative in proposing to what sectors of the Defense Support program the reduction should be applied.

We understand that the Military Assistance Program being proposed by the Defense Department for Cambodia for FY 59 is slightly higher in dollar value than the FY 58 program. While we believe that Cambodia's recent recognition of Communist China makes it politically desirable to apply to the Defense Support program for that country at least the average of the Congressional percentage of reduction in Defense Support appropriations, we do not believe that the same factor need govern with respect to the Military Assistance Program since the dollar value of country military aid programs is not normally disclosed to foreign governments.

Our Missions in neighboring Southeast Asian countries were authorized at their discretion to inform the governments of those countries of the outcome of our reappraisal of United States aid to Cambodia following recognition of Communist China. We are also considering the possibility of informing certain countries in the area, at an appropriate time, of the reduction in Defense Support aid for Cambodia in FY 59.

Sincerely yours,

Walter S. Robertson[3]

[3] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature. A signed copy is in Washington National Records Center, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698, 092 Cambodia.

83. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, September 26, 1958.

SUBJECT

Cambodia—Defense Support Aid Level FY 1959

I am disturbed by the recent decision fixing the firm Defense Support aid level for Cambodia at $20 million, with an additional $2.5 million indicated only as a probability. I understand that this decision reflected a view that all efforts should be made to induce the Cambodians to accept a reduction in U.S. support of their military budget and to increase their own contribution. I feel that even to discuss such a figure with the Cambodians would arouse the gravest apprehensions on their part which would only be partly alleviated by a subsequent increase of the figure to $22.5 million.

During State–ICA discussions on FY 1959 aid levels, ICA took the position that $27.5 million would be needed to carry on existing programs, including the completion of the port highway. This figure assumed a 10 per cent reduction in the U.S. contribution to the military budget. Only $25 million, however, had been requested from Congress. In view of Cambodia's recognition of Communist China, FE considered that the pro rata 10 per cent cut in Defense Support appropriations should be imposed on Cambodia, and consequently proposed a level of $22.5 million. This level itself will definitely force a further reduction in U.S. support of the military. On the other hand, the $20 million dollar level would exceed the pro rata Congressional cut, would create almost impossible programming difficulties, and could only be regarded as punitive by the Cambodians. I understand that Defense, while prepared to accept the $22.5 million figure, would have serious reservations about the lower figure.

It is expected that aid may be discussed during Prince Sihanouk's visit to Washington next week. A punitive aid level is likely to vitiate our objective of making his visit contribute positively to improved relations, and could give rise to some extremely unpleasant exchanges. There is also the possibility that Cambodia might seek additional aid from the Communist bloc as an offset to the U.S. reduction.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5-MSP/9-2658. Confidential. Drafted by Robert G. Cleveland and cleared by SEA, W/MSC, and FE. In a covering memorandum for Executive Secretary Fisher Howe, Palmer asked for quick action on this memorandum in light of Sihanouk's visit to Washington next week. Howe should inform Herter that Secretary Dulles had expressed the view that the United States might use the lower aid level figure to negotiate lower military aid with the Cambodians. The covering memorandum is included in the microfiche supplement.

Recommendation

That the firm FY 1959 Defense Support aid level for Cambodia be increased from $20 million to $22.5 million.[2]

[2] Herter initialed his approval of the recommendation.

84. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, September 30, 1958, 4:15 p.m.[1]

SUBJECT

Prince Sihanouk's Call on the Secretary

PARTICIPANTS

His Royal Highness, Prince Sihanouk, Prime Minister of Cambodia
The Honorable Nong Kimny, Ambassador of Cambodia
John Foster Dulles—The Secretary of State
Walter S. Robertson—Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
Eric Kocher—Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs
Joseph A. Mendenhall—Acting Officer in Charge, Cambodian Affairs

The Secretary asked Prince Sihanouk what matters he wished to discuss. The Prince said that the only purpose of his visit is to pay homage to the U.S. Government and to express gratitude for its friendship and aid to Cambodia. He expressed the hope that Cambodia would have stronger links with the U.S. and his thanks for our understanding of Cambodian policy which is necessitated by his country's special situation. He said he had no problems to present.

The Secretary said that we have had sympathy for Cambodia and its aspirations for some time. He recalled the Prince's previous visit to Washington when there were discussions about Cambodia's getting its independence. At that time the French wanted us to inject ourselves into the war in Indochina, but we took the position that we would do so only if the French would grant independence to the three Indochina

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/9–3058. Confidential. Drafted by Mendenhall and cleared by Kocher and Robertson. A briefing memorandum from Robertson to Dulles, September 29, is *ibid.*, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Sihanouk 1958 Visit to U.S. 22.2; included in the microfiche supplement) Earlier in the day, Sihanouk met with Eisenhower from 12:45 to 12:57 p.m. They exchanged gifts and pleasantries. (Eisenhower Library, President's Daily Appointment Book, and telegram 263 to Phnom Penh, October 1; Department of State, Central Files, 033.51H11/10–158) Briefing material for the President on Sihanouk's visit is included in the microfiche supplement.

states. The French were unwilling to do that, but Cambodia achieved its independence anyway. Our desire now is that Cambodia keep that independence.

The Secretary said he would not be frank if he did not say that we have some concern over the motives and ambitions of the Chinese Communists in Southeast Asia. We believe they as Communists desire to bring all governments everywhere under the control of the Communist party. The Communist creed of peace, order, and maximum productivity is aimed at bringing everything into conformity and having it run by the Communist party. The Communists thus take a mechanistic view of the world. We, on the other hand, do not believe that human beings can be brought into that kind of mechanistic order. As human beings differ from each other, a world program of trying to make them act and think alike is not possible. We believe that the best society admits of diversity. It must permit differences, but at the same time make sure that those differences do not lead to war.

The Secretary cited a recent speech by Mr. Spaak, Secretary General of NATO, in which he said that we must assess the magnitude of the challenge thrown out to us: it is not a challenge of the Soviet Union to the U.S., but of the Communist world to the free world. The Secretary said that, as we were once a colony, we always have sympathy for the aspirations of nations. We believe in real independence, and not in subserviency as displayed by governments under the control of the Communist party, such as the European and Asian satellites. Those who really believe in independence need to stand together. That is the reason that we are helping Cambodia: we want to help it to stay independent. He implored the Prince not to underestimate the Communist danger.

The Prince expressed agreement with the Secretary on Communism as a regime, and mentioned the fact that electoral propaganda in Cambodia had been directed against Communism. He stated that it is in the interest of the U.S. for Cambodia to be neutral because neutrality, by uniting the whole Cambodian nation behind the monarchy, is the best defense against Communism. If another policy were followed, there would be serious division within the country. He said that the best proof that neutrality has prevented Communist success in Cambodia is the results of the general elections in his country. In 1955 the Communist party in Cambodia (which the Prince characterized as a "gift of the Viet Minh") got 3 percent of the votes. During the intervening period before the next election, the Prince worked hard on a program to raise the standard of living and, therefore, in the 1958 election, the Communists got less than 1 percent of the votes and no seats in the parliament. The Prince doubted that better results could be obtained in other countries under free elections.

The Secretary commented that he did not mean to imply any criticism of Cambodian policy. We are not asking Cambodia to depart from its neutrality policy as that is for the Cambodian Government to decide. We only hope that the independence of Cambodia will not be lost through accident or carelessness. We in the U.S. have perhaps a broader experience, and he, therefore, wished only to emphasize the insidiousness of the Communist conspiracy. We do not question the fact that Communists obtain material accomplishments through hard work, discipline and austerity, but material results are not the only thing that matters.

The Prince expressed agreement with the Secretary's view. The Secretary added that no personality demonstrates better than the Prince what a free individual can achieve in obtaining independence. The Secretary said that the Communists would stamp out the Prince's buoyancy, just as Mao Tse-tung stamped out the "hundred flowers" as soon as they stuck their heads up. Mr. Robertson said that, according to the Yugoslav Ambassador in Peiping, 330,000 rightists have been liquidated since that time. He added that liquidations have totaled about 15,000,000 in the USSR and 15–20,000,000 in China.

The Prince expressed awareness that the internal policy of the Communists is not soft. However, he said that the Chiang Kai-shek regime, though liberal, had been corrupt and inattentive to the basic needs of the people, and it was, therefore, possible for the Communist regime to establish itself in China. The question now is whether it will be possible to change that regime one day. The Secretary replied that he thought eventually there would be a change to something more independent and less monolithic in view of the individualistic nature of the Chinese.

The Secretary inquired regarding Cambodian relations with Viet-Nam. The Prince characterized the situation as "still delicate". He briefly recounted the history of the Stung Treng border incident, saying that the Vietnamese had placed a new border marker 2 kilometers inside Cambodia. When President Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, visited Phnom Penh, he promised to do his best to arrive at a settlement. A few days later the King received a letter from Nhu in which the Vietnamese Government agreed to remove the new border marker. The Prince characterized this as recognition by Viet-Nam of the fact that it had committed a wrong. He said that he had asked the Vietnamese to place a new marker where the old one which they had destroyed had been, because he could not accept the existence of a no-man's land.

The Secretary said that we try not to become mixed up in boundary disputes of this sort. We do, however, try to be helpful by urging both sides to reach a settlement. Mr. Robertson indicated we had felt we had no competence to settle the border marker dispute between

Cambodia and Viet-Nam, but had followed a policy of urging both governments to get together to settle it. The Prince said that Cambodia is ready to send negotiators to Saigon, but that it is still awaiting an answer from the Vietnamese Government. He said that he was personally prepared to go at any time and discuss matters with President Diem, but had received an answer prior to coming to the U.S. that Diem was too busy and not able to receive him at that time. He said that he would like to have the relations of a good neighbor with Viet-Nam, and that the only thing that he asks of the U.S. is that it tell Viet-Nam that it would be good for Cambodia and Viet-Nam to negotiate their problems. He referred in favorable terms to the willingness of the Thai Government to negotiate with Cambodia and indicated that, even though no results had been achieved, this willingness to negotiate satisfied Cambodia. Mr. Robertson said that he would further discuss relations between Cambodia and Viet-Nam in his subsequent meeting with the Prince on October 2.[2]

[2] An account of Robertson's and Sihanouk's October 2 conversation, which included neutralism, U.S. aid to Cambodia, Cambodia–South Vietnam relations, subversion, and Taiwan, is in telegram 267 to Phnom Penh, October 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 033.51H11/10–358; included in the microfiche supplement)

85. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, November 5, 1958.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material unrelated to Cambodia.]

South Vietnam–Cambodia

South Vietnam feels its security is jeopardized by expanding Communist influence in neighboring Cambodia under the guidance of Crown Prince Sihanouk. Saigon hopes to engineer Sihanouk's abdication or otherwise arrange his removal from power and is prepared to

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. No classification marking.

work with anti-Communist elements within Cambodia to this end.[2] Sihanouk recently made a trip to the U.S. He was former King and stepped down to be Premier.

John S.D. Eisenhower

[2] An exchange of letters between Strom and Robertson, October 20 and 30, respectively, on the need to discourage the Diem government from attempting to overthrow Sihanouk is in Department of State, FE Files: Lot 60 D 90, Strom, and Saigon Embassy Files: Lot 65 F 98, 320 Vietnam–Cambodia 1958, Classified Aug–Dec; both included in the microfiche supplement.

86. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, November 8, 1958—8 a.m.

551. [*1 line of source text not declassified*]

Difficult believe man Nhu's experience could have said GVN will attempt overthrow Sihanouk by end November. If so, he must be serously misinformed.

1. I disagree emphatically with idea it would be desirable even from GVN point of view to eliminate Sihanouk, particularly by end of November.

2. I see no evidence that there is any cohesive group opposed to Sihanouk that would venture to plot his overthrow at present. On contrary, Sihanouk's prestige very high as result his recent tours.

3. King and Queen would be unlikely receive Nhu agents or intermediaries; much less be persuaded by them to urge Sihanouk, on whom they dote, to take long vacation in favor Monireth. [*3 lines of source text not declassified*]

4. Royal attitude re recognition ChiComs presumably reflected in Queen's strong defense this action to me (Embassy telegram 144).[2]

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/11–858. Secret; Limit Distribution; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Repeated to Saigon and Bangkok.

[2] In telegram 144, July 27, Strom reported Queen Kossamak's reaction to his démarche about the dangers of Chinese Communist subversion:

"Queen reacted sharply and strongly implied it was not my business to concern myself with this matter; that it did not make any difference to Cambodians what political beliefs foreigners among them held as long as they did not interfere with government's policy of neutrality. However, pointing at throne behind which we were seated, she said, 'We know that if the Communists come the throne goes.' She added that there have been 80 Kings on Cambodian throne and Cambodian people are united in defending it." (*Ibid.*, 611.51H/7–2758)

Even if not pleased by recognition, they probably realize difficulties reversing process five months after event.

5. I doubt most seriously any group "led by Sam Sary" could mobilize support to carry out a "coup force". Embassy has no indication FARK support and MAAG doubts seriously present or past CO tank battalion, Phnom Penh, would support such coup.

6. Nhu must realize US would oppose any plot such as reported.

7. Nhu should also realize no plot could succeed if GVN involvement known and no government established as result GVN intervention could command popular support.

If Nhu is, nevertheless, considering action along lines report, he should be promptly disabused. There is always danger some incident between GVN and RKG and if one should occur, it might convince Nhu that it was time to act. I hope Department and Embassy Saigon will fully appreciate that if a serious report of Nhu's plotting should reach Sihanouk, he will assume US has knowledge of it and will react violently to the gravest detriment of our position in Cambodia and with resultant bad effect in area.[3]

[3] Telegram 551 bears no signature.

87. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, November 19, 1958—7:50 p.m.

381. Mau[2] met with Robertson November 17 and 18. Cambodia, Laos and aid to Vietnam discussed. Separate cable sent on Laos portion talk.[3] Memorandum conversation on aid questions[4] will be pouched.

Mau stated Sihanouk's policies harmful to free world, he cannot be induced alter them and therefore should not continue be supported. Mau expressed awareness our view that no prospect exists for replacing Sihanouk, but said Vietnamese intelligence indicates internal opposition to Sihanouk growing. Mau referred to replacement of Siha-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/11–1958. Confidential. Drafted by Mendenhall, cleared by Kocher and Jenkins, and approved by Robertson. Also sent to Saigon and repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Vu Van Mau, Vietnamese Foreign Minister.

[3] Not found.

[4] For text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1958–1960, vol. I, p. 100.

nouk by Nong Kimny as Prime Minister in 1956 at time when Sihanouk having military aid troubles, and said this brought about reorientation of Cambodian policy toward free world.

Robertson immediately pointed out we do not use our aid to exert political pressure on any country. We had nothing to do with replacement Sihanouk by Nong Kimny in 1956. Bulk our assistance to Cambodia used for support of army which is strongest anti-Communist force in Cambodia. ChiComs have offered military aid to Cambodia and would be immediately prepared fill vacuum if we withdrew our support from Cambodian army. Thus on balance we believe it in free world interest that we continue aid Cambodia. Robertson also noted Sihanouk had declined ChiCom military aid, and had refused further ChiCom economic assistance beyond that already accepted.

Mau said Phnom Penh is ChiCom headquarters for Southeast Asia and ChiCom Embassy has staff of 200. Request information available Phnom Penh re numbers and activities ChiComs in Embassy with any reactions in community to their presence.

Robertson raised question Vietnamese-Cambodian border marker dispute. Mau reviewed history this matter. He said according Cambodian King's letter purpose proposed RKG two-man mission to Saigon would be replacement border marker, but that Son Sann told him in Seattle mission would also want negotiate release Vietnamese prisoners in Cambodia. Mau said GVN had replied to King that, since frontier not agreed upon, local authorities of two countries should first collect facts on the spot about boundary before higher level meeting between two governments took place. King was also told GVN would be willing receive Cambodian mission for discussion other matters RKG might wish raise.

We told Mau we thought proposed Cambodian mission to Saigon could serve useful purpose of agreeing on procedures for collection of facts about frontier. Despite our repeated suggestions along this line Mau remained firm in view that GVN had taken proper course. Referring to increased tension which followed failure Cambodian-Thai negotiations in August, he expressed apprehension similar result would ensue from Vietnamese-Cambodian talks if not adequately prepared beforehand. FYI. Though some ground exists for this feeling we inclined to believe no real desire for settlement this problem by either side except on its own terms. End FYI.

Herter

88. Letter From the Ambassador in Vietnam (Durbrow) to the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Cumming)[1]

Saigon, November 20, 1958.

DEAR HUGH: I enclose two copies of a memorandum of a conversation I had with Brother Nhu concerning Sihanouk and the situation in Cambodia. [*1 line of source text not declassified*]

[*1 paragraph (1 line of source text) not declassified*]

Howard Elting and I have no intention of going into this business any further with Nhu but since the latter deliberately brought up the subject I thought we should hear him out and report the results through this channel. Nhu is obviously trying to stimulate our interest with a view to enlisting our cooperation or at least our acquiescence in possible future moves against Sihanouk.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Elbridge Durbrow[2]

Enclosure

Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Ambassador in Vietnam (Durbrow) and Presidential Adviser Ngo Dinh Nhu, Saigon, November 13, 1958[3]

SUBJECT

Cambodian Situation

During the course of a two-hour luncheon today, Ngo dinh Nhu, the President's brother, volunteered the following information regarding current developments in Cambodia. The following are the pertinent parts of that conversation.

According to Nhu, many diverse elements in Cambodia are perturbed about the economic and political situation as well as the question of the growing corruption. These heterogeneous elements for different reasons desire to see Sihanouk replaced by someone other than one of Sihanouk's stooges. There is no question of a coup d'etat per se, since there are no forces of a cohesive enough nature to carry out a successful coup. Nevertheless, there is enough dissatisfaction

[1] Source: Department of State, Saigon Embassy Files: Lot 62 F 52, 320 Cambodia, 1956. Secret; Official–Informal; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

[3] Secret; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Durbrow.

with the actual situation to cause Sihanouk some concern about his own position. However, since he does not see how he can solve the existing social, economic, and political problems or quell the latent discontent over corruption, Sihanouk is toying with the idea of stepping down in favor of Prince Monireth. Since Sihanouk fears that if he puts another one of his stooges in as Prime Minister he will only make matters worse, he believes he can take the wind out of the sails of the heterogeneous opposition by making Monireth Prime Minister. According to Nhu, Monireth is well known for being a super-nationalist, an anti-Communist, and a very honest man who is against corruption. Therefore, he is the only person in the country who will satisfy the various disgruntled groups which are separately worried about current developments.

According to Nhu, Sihanouk's popularity is based in considerable part on the fact that the Communist cadres throughout the country work continuously to bolster his popularity since he is playing a pro-Communist game. Moreover, Nhu believes that despite outward appearances the Queen is worried because she has lost her influence with Sihanouk. Nhu claims that although the Queen has not let it be known except to intimates, she was not consulted regarding recognition of the Chicoms. She is worried by this fact and about the future of the royal family following that recognition. The Queen also is apprehensive about the heterogeneous opposition and feels that it would be best for her and Sihanouk if someone else took over temporarily. For this reason she also is thinking of making her brother, Prince Monireth, the next Prime Minister. Thus, according to Nhu, there are many elements working toward a legal change of government headed by Monireth.

The reason Sihanouk and the Queen are thinking along these lines is that they believe this would be a very cunning move which would put the onus of solving their difficult problems on Monireth. The assumption of the Premiership by Monireth will also act as a safety valve for the various opposition elements. Furthermore, Monireth who is not very clever and has an honest one-track mind, will immediately initiate action against Communism and corruption, and to try to straighten out the economic situation. This will antagonize all the elements favorable to Sihanouk, particularly the Communists. His action will unite these elements, which include Sihanouk's hand-picked deputies, and bring about the fall of Monireth's government in due course. When this takes place, the present opposition elements will have exposed themselves, proven their inability to run the government, and the people will again clamor to have Sihanouk resume power. This phase, according to Nhu, will develop purely from internal pressures, and should not and could not be aided and abetted by any outside power, particularly Viet-Nam or even Thailand.

Phase two of this change in government should give an opportunity for Viet-Nam, Thailand, the United States, and other Western countries to so influence Monireth that he will not play the game of Sihanouk, the Queen, and the Communists. If Monireth plays his cards well, he will in due course be able to change the orientation of Cambodian policy so that instead of moving further and further to the Left, it will become more favorable to the free world. For instance, once Monireth takes over as Premier, he should be advised not to make any anti-Communist statements, nor to denounce corruption and not to make any startling statements about the need to revamp the economy. On the contrary, he should firmly announce Cambodia will follow the same policies as in the past and live up to its commitments with all countries. In this way the plans of Sihanouk and the others will be frustrated and the comparatively small opposition groups who now favor Monireth would gain in effectiveness and be able to retain him in power. In the meantime, according to Nhu, Monireth, who is well liked and respected by most of the army, should quietly work to get the army and police force more solidly behind him. He should also quietly work on the few anti-Communist province chiefs to win them over. If he is successful in this endeavor, other province chiefs who are now either bought or controlled by the Communists will disengage themselves from this affiliation and look favorably upon Monireth. Once Monireth has gained sufficient backing from these elements, he would then be in a position to carry out the anti-Communist and anti-corruption policies he desires to put into effect and take steps to better the economic situation of the country.

Nhu believes that the growing tendency in the Near East, Pakistan, Burma, and Thailand for the military to take over control from selfish politicians will come to the fore in Cambodia to assure Monireth's retention of power, provided he plays his cards carefully. Nhu admitted that if this second phase is successful, Monireth would be more of a super-nationalist than Sihanouk and would make excessive demands on Viet-Nam, Thailand, and possibly even Laos. Nevertheless, Monireth is definitely anti-Communist, incorrupt, and pro-Western, particularly pro-French. In order to bring about a more pro-Western policy in Cambodia, Viet-Nam would be willing to put up with these super-nationalistic claims of Monireth. This problem could be handled amicably in due course, once the basic Cambodian policy has been changed. Nhu stated that since Monireth, a graduate of St. Cyr, is pro-French, the French would not be against his taking and retaining power. Even if he should fail to stay in power, the French would not have antagonized Sihanouk since all they would have done would have been to "go along with his desire to step down from power in favor of Monireth."

After describing this situation, Nhu explained that Bao Dai, the French and General Hinh, Binh Xuyen, Communists, and other intriguers in 1954 believed that if they put Ngo dinh Diem in power, he, too, would hang himself by taking too precipitate action and thus eliminate himself as a political power in the country. According to Nhu, Diem and his entourage realized this and frustrated the plans of these intriguers by playing their cards carefully and slowly. Nhu said, for instance, instead of attacking the Binh Xuyen head-on, Diem maneuvered them into withdrawing from Saigon. They withdrew into what the French considered an impregnable area from which it would have been very costly in men and ammunition to drive them out. Again, instead of doing as the French expected, Diem did not attack but merely saw to it that all food supplies were cut off from the Binh Xuyen and eventually they were so weakened that they could be defeated at slight cost.

I interrupted Nhu repeatedly during the conversation to raise questions and particularly pointed out that such a plan is complicated to say the least and that I questioned seriously whether it would be successful. Nhu admitted that this is true but stated that the situation had become so serious that if Monireth should become Prime Minister, it is in the interests of Viet-Nam, the United States, and other free countries to do all they can to keep him in power.

When Nhu first brought up this subject, I told him that Mr. Elting had reported to me about a conversation he had had with Nhu along similar lines a few days ago and that in the meantime we had been thinking about the matter quite seriously. I added that, while there may be certain anti-Sihanouk elements in Cambodia, we had no information indicating that they are strong, cohesive, or effective in any way. I added, on the contrary Sihanouk seemed to be more popular than ever after his visits to China, the U.S., and the U.N. and therefore any efforts made to unseat him by coup d'etat or otherwise would probably be unsuccessful and would only enhance his prestige. It might even drive him further into the arms of the Chinese Communists. It was at this point that Nhu stated much of Sihanouk's surface popularity is due to Communist activities which are backing him to the hilt. I stated that while I was aware that Monireth was at one time a fairly popular military figure, he has been in retirement for a long time and therefore, as far as we are aware, he has no popular appeal. Nhu reiterated he does have considerable popularity with large sections of the armed forces and if he could win over the armored brigade in Phnom Penh, which is quite possible, his chances of remaining in power would be greatly enhanced. I then said that we had heard reports that Dap Chhuon was somewhat dissatisfied with developments in Cambodia and asked whether he would favor Monireth. Nhu replied that although Dap Chhuon is not too pleased with current

developments, he is too tied to the regime to be trusted to take effective action unless he were to become convinced that things were going well for whoever might replace Sihanouk. Nhu then brought in the name of Son Ngoc Thanh, who is anti-Sihanouk but who is a republican and therefore probably would be against Prince Monireth. I asked Nhu how the Deputies and other persons like Penn Nouth, Sam Sary, and others would react to Monireth's retaining power. He did not go into details in answer to this question nor give any indications that Sam Sary might be involved in Monireth's plan. He confined his remarks to saying once Monireth had the backing of the army and certain other political elements in the country, these persons would fall in line or be neutralized. Before going on to another subject, I again emphasized to Nhu that we had been giving very serious consideration to the situation and developments in Cambodia and that we had no indication whatsoever that any such plan would succeed and made it clear it would not have U.S. backing. I added our information indicated that not only was Sihanouk very popular but he has the full backing of the Queen and most other effective elements in the country. Nhu replied that when General Collins was Ambassador here, he and the American Intelligence Service were convinced that Ngo dinh Diem could not last for more than a few weeks. We were wrong then, and he is convinced we are wrong now.

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89. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Washington, November 21, 1958—6 p.m.

594. Reference: [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]; Embtel 551; Deptel 381, sent Saigon 720.[2]

A. Fact Nhu's thinking now somewhat more realistic removes immediate danger attempted coup by GVN. However, Nhu only assured Ambassador Durbrow that GVN is not considering forceful coup. From what Nhu has said it must be assumed GVN will continue maneuvers in Cambodia aimed at weakening Sihanouk's position as head RKG. On past record of GVN maneuvers here and given Nhu's misunderstanding situation, these actions will probably be clumsy and

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/11–2158. Secret; Limited Distribution; Noforn Continued Control; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Documents 86 and 87.

thus dangerous. Even if not clumsy, such maneuvers on part GVN, which closely identified in RKG mind with US, would not be consonant with friendly assurances which Sihanouk received in US. Nhu has made it clear that GVN would like to get Sihanouk out of power and that only reason it is not at present considering forceful coup is that it does not seem feasible. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

In last four days press polemics between GVN and RKG have been resumed. Since Cambodian material is in answer charges in VN press, it appears campaign was resumed at VN initiative. There is strong chance this will get worse and end present détente.

I believe pursuant OCB paper on Cambodia US interests require it be made very clear to GVN that it is our policy to encourage closer association and cooperation between free nations SEA (see also inter alia OCB file no 41 of May 25, 1955 sent under CA–9235 of June 25, 1955)[3] and that we take serious view attempt interfere in internal affairs RKG.

Following line might be used:

We would like inform GVN of our position on GVN–RKG relations as explained by Secretary Robertson to Sihanouk (Deptel 267)[4] viz., we urge both countries seek settlement through peaceful negotiations and we support principles renunciation force and peaceful settlement disputes set forth UN Charter. In doing this we are making our position clear both countries.

Furthermore, we understand that since Secretary Robertson spoke to Sihanouk along above lines, GVN has considered various means whereby Sihanouk might be replaced. In this connection we believe any such moves by GVN would promptly come to attention RKG and result in dangerous deterioration GVN–RKG relations. The US would be opposed to any attempt by GVN to interfere in internal affairs RKG, just as US would oppose outside interference in internal affairs GVN.

GVN should also be reminded that it has an implied commitment to the US to seek a financial settlement with Cambodia brought about by its reservation of 200 million piasters last year for a payment on its obligation to Cambodia; a sum which would otherwise have been devoted to the defense budget. Embassy understands that US agreed to increase its aid by this amount to enable GVN to make a payment on its obligation to RKG.

B. As to Nhu's statement to Ambassador Durbrow that Sihanouk wishes to step down due his inability handle RKG's problems, I have no indication that Sihanouk is perturbed. He seems confident. He is planning state visit Indonesia February and plans receive Admiral Felt

[3] Not found.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 84.

for official visit after he returns from Indonesia. It is always possible Sihanouk will resign, but unlikely he will do so from sense his own inability handle Cambodia's problems.

There is no doubt GVN agents can find diverse dissatisfied element in Cambodia. This is normal. Son Ngoc Thanh can hardly be considered a likely leader these disorganized groups. He is widely respected for his fight for Cambodian independence, but, since independence now attained, and in view his steady refusal cooperate with RKG or even live in Cambodia (although he has been offered safe return), he is considered increasingly disgruntled man who has abandoned principles and only seeks return to power by any means. He has no organized following.

In general I continue believe that despite Sihanouk's faults his removal from Cambodian scene would cause serious instability and provide increased opportunities for Communists. Monireth is high principled, autocratic and his little practical experience in government. I am dubious about his ability provide effective leadership in Cambodia where politics characterized by compromise and corruption and where leader must be able create strong feelings personal sympathy among people. French Ambassador Gorce agrees with me that he poses no threat at all to Sihanouk's position at present. From GVN point of view Monireth likely to be more nationalistic and uncompromising on various problems dividing the two countries than Sihanouk.

C. Embassy appreciates Department's efforts second and third paragraphs Embtel 381, and requests Department's reactions above suggestions.

Separate telegrams follow re other points raised Deptel 381.[5]

Strom

[5] In telegram 612 from Phnom Penh, November 26, the Embassy reported that Cambodia and South Vietnam had reached an agreement on the disputed border marker and that there was also progress on other Cambodian-South Vietnamese issues. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/11–2658)

90. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, December 1, 1958[1]

SUBJECT

Withdrawal of Cambodian Ambassador in Bangkok

PARTICIPANTS

His Excellency Nong Kimny, Cambodian Ambassador
Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
J. Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary
Eric Kocher, Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs
Thomas J. Corcoran, Officer in Charge, Laos Affairs

Ambassador Nong Kimny called at our invitation to discuss with Mr. Robertson the suspension of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Thailand. He took the occasion to hand Mr. Robertson, under cover of a note dated December 1, a copy of a Cambodian government communiqué on the withdrawal of the Cambodian Ambassador in Bangkok.[2]

Nong Kimny briefly reviewed Thai/Cambodian relations during the last few years with particular stress on the question of the Temple Preah Vihear which he said the Thai had occupied improperly. He referred to Prince Sihanouk's recent visit to Bangkok, to the subsequent breakdown in negotiations on the Preah Vihear question and to the demonstrations against the Cambodian Embassy in Bangkok last September. He also cited harassment of the Cambodian frontier police by the Thai police and stated that three days after the recall of the Cambodian Ambassador in Bangkok, the Thai started building up huge concentrations of troops and war matériel at the frontier. It was for this latter reason he had called at the Department on November 29[3] to inform us that these steps taken by the Thai constituted a threat to peace in that part of the world. All of these developments, he said, led to the Cambodian decision to suspend diplomatic relations with Thailand.

The Cambodian government hoped that the United States as a genuine and sincere friend of both Cambodia and Thailand would do all it could to help preserve peace. The Ambassador's most recent instructions from his government were to tell the Department that if

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 601.51H92/12–158. Confidential. Drafted by Corcoran and approved by Kocher and Parsons.

[2] The substantive text of the communiqué was transmitted in telegram 1311 from Bangkok, November 25. (*Ibid.*, 651H.92/11–2558) Cumming sent Dulles a memorandum on November 25 summarizing the recent deterioration of Thai-Cambodian relations. (*Ibid.*, 601.51H92/11–2558; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Reported in a memorandum of conversation, November 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 601.51H92/11–2958)

there were a country that was threatened, that country could not be Thailand. Thailand was a mighty military power by comparison with Cambodia. The Cambodian Government and people hoped that all allies of Thailand, particularly the United States, would never let Thailand invade Cambodia.

Mr. Robertson said he hoped he need not emphasize to Nong Kimny the well-known opposition of the US to the use of force in the settlement of international disputes. It was inconceivable to us that armed conflict should take place between Thailand and Cambodia in this instance. Our position of opposition to the use of force was the same throughout the world in disputes involving North and South Korea, North and South Viet-Nam, East and West Germany, India and Pakistan, Portugal and India and the Netherlands and Indonesia, for example. Resort to war to settle all these disputes would represent a breakdown of world order. In October President Chiang pledged to the world that he would not use force in the settlement of his differences with the Chinese Communists. If war should come in that quarter it would be because the Communists wanted it and had refused to renounce it. Mr. Robertson said he had cited all these instances to emphasize that we have taken the position with such strong allies as Presidents Rhee and Chiang that we will not use our arms or provide logistic support for offensive military action. It is a fundamental principle of our policy to persuade all nations to renounce the use of force in the settlement of international problems.

Mr. Robertson asked Nong Kimny if the Cambodians thought that a temporary suspension of diplomatic relations with Thailand offered a better chance of solving differences between the two countries than continuance of the relations. Nong Kimny replied that after the breakdown of negotiations on Preah Vihear the Cambodians had repeatedly stated particularly in informal contacts with Prince Wan in New York that they were ready to resume negotiations whenever the Thai so desired. The suspension of relations with Thailand was a regrettable measure but it was the only means by which a weak country such as Cambodia could protest the abuse heaped upon it by a more powerful country. This was not a hasty decision by Prince Sihanouk. It had been pondered for a long time. Perhaps it could be understood only in the context of the centuries of mistrust that had existed between Thailand and Cambodia.

Mr. Robertson remarked that the Ambassador was correct in saying that the US was a friend of both Thailand and Cambodia. We desired to be helpful and would exert whatever influence we had with both countries towards a settlement of their differences and the re-

establishment of good relations between them.[4] We would be glad to help in any way we could in the finding of a solution in accordance with principles of the United Nations Charter. Any other course of action would be unthinkable to us. Nong Kimny said he personally was glad to see that the Cambodian government always thought first of turning to the United States which had so helped Cambodia in the past. Cambodia was not asking the US to exert pressure on any other country but had confidence in American principles and it was sure that the US could help to settle this problem. Mr. Robertson thanked the Ambassador for the communiqué he had presented and said that we should read it and communicate with the Ambassador again.

As Ambassador Nong Kimny was leaving the building he remarked in conversation with Mr. Kocher that he did not see why the Neighborly Relations resolution inspired by the Czechs in the UN should involve Cambodia and Thailand but that he had no instructions from his government on this subject.

[4] At Department instructions, the Ambassadors in Bangkok and Phnom Penh offered to transmit messages between Cambodia and Thailand in an effort to help expedite their resolution of differences. This offer was accepted by both countries. While some reduction in tensions could be traced to negotiations through the respective American Ambassadors, Thai-Cambodian discussions reached an impasse by December 20. At this point the Department concluded that the mission of Baron Beck-Friis on behalf of U.N. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, which both Thailand and Cambodia had requested, afforded the best prospect for the resolution of the Thai-Cambodian problems. (Telegram 428 to Phnom Penh, also sent to Bangkok as 1183, December 4; and telegram 476 to Phnom Penh, also sent to Bangkok as 1310, December 20; *ibid.*, 651H.92/12–458 and 651H.92/12–2058, respectively)

91. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, December 12, 1958—10 a.m.

1148. Phnom Penh 256.[2]

1. GVN has surfaced [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to Embassy desire assist overthrow Sihanouk by opposition elements Cambodia. Both times GVN has been dissuaded by US representatives. It is true that GVN has not entirely dropped idea of coup by

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/12–1258. Secret; Limited Distribution; Noforn Continued Control; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Repeated to Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

[2] Printed as telegram 594 from Phnom Penh, Document 89.

force, but encouragingly for us, GVN is now taking more realistic look at situation. Improving relations between GVN/RKG may be superficial at this time, but we believe GVN willing meet RKG half way in solving problems peacefully. Embassy has played active role in-preventing precipitate action by GVN against Sihanouk and will continue do so.

2. We find no evidence of recent press campaign against Sihanouk or Cambodia. Embassy has urged GVN representatives to avoid polemics during this critical period and GVN has told us that all Saigon newspapers are under government instructions to avoid criticizing RKG. [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*] Barring deterioration of present improving relationship, we do not agree re probability resumption polemics. On contrary, fact that offensive article in Phnom Penh's *Depeche* during last week November against Ngo family was ignored by GVN would seem to show that GVN sincerely desires improved relations.

3. US position on SEA well known to and generally approved by GVN. However, it has been difficult convince GVN maintain its moderation in face of RKG's provocative actions, chief of which was recognition of Communist China. GVN feels this move poses most dangerous threat to security and very existence of Free Vietnam and proves insincerity of RKG in its relations with its neighbors. GVN may talk about doing things, but it is Sihanouk/RKG who, by their actions, have caused deterioration of free world's position in SEA.

4. Embassy does not believe US relationships with GVN and RKG can be equated. GVN is, generally speaking, responsive to US suggestions while RKG, although appearing to be responsive at times, pays lip service and then does as it pleases. [*3 lines of source text not declassified*]

5. Although GVN has repeatedly told us they are prepared to find solution financial problems with RKG, US has not promised to increase aid correspondingly. Embassy believes GVN sincerely desires reach financial settlement with RKG but only if RKG demands are realistic.

6. Regarding Son Ngoc Thanh, Embassy has reiterated to Nhu that Thanh does not have following and it would be highly unlikely he could replace Sihanouk if latter stepped down.

7. Embassy believes there is no misunderstanding of US views regarding Sihanouk and RKG in GVN. Embassy played active role dissuading GVN from taking precipitate action against Sihanouk. If relations between two countries improve, GVN will probably stop thinking about coup. If on other hand, relations take turn for worse, then we can expect revival of GVN scheming.

Elting

92. Letter From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Ambassador in Vietnam (Durbrow)[1]

Washington, December 19, 1958.

DEAR DURBY: Thank you very much for the memorandum of conversation with Ngo Dinh Nhu, which you forwarded under cover of your letter to me of November 20.[2] [*1 line of source text not declassified*] As you say, there has been [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] reporting recently about possible GVN attempts to remove Sihanouk from power by one way or another, and your memorandum provides many clarifying details.

It is always difficult to prognosticate about Cambodian policies and especially about the mercurial Prince, but I doubt that a coup against Sihanouk could succeed at the present time. I say this because we have no reliable evidence which would indicate that civilian opposition elements in Cambodia are sufficiently numerous, strong, or united to overthrow Sihanouk; that Sihanouk's popularity has decreased significantly in recent months; or that the armed forces and police organizations would not support him in the event of a coup.

Although Nhu made several valid points about Cambodian leaders, such as Dap Chhuon's attitude toward current political developments in Cambodia, Nhu's argument about a possible take-over by Monireth seems to embrace a number of illogical points. His implication that Sihanouk would stand aside passively and permit Monireth gradually to take over the bases of supreme power in Cambodia, including the armed forces and the province chiefs, seems completely unrealistic, and his attempt to draw a corollary between Diem's rise to power in Vietnam and a possible take-over by Monireth in Cambodia clearly fails to take into account the basic differences between the two situations.

The situations in the Indochina area, of course, are quite unstable and that is why we have been particularly happy to benefit from the Embassy's reporting. [*1 line of source text not declassified*] in light of the mass of unverifiable rumor and speculation, we always look in our final analyses to the observations and judgment of your staff.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 84, Cambodia Embassy Files, FRC 66 A 878, 350 Cambodia 1956–58, Classified. Secret; Official/Informal.

[2] Document 88.

Please relay our appreciation and extend my hope that one and all have a very merry Christmas.

With best regards

Sincerely yours,

Hugh

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93. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, January 12, 1959—5 p.m.

802. CINCPAC for POLAD. I refer to [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] reports Soviets and ChiComs have informed Sihanouk of Sam Sary plot[2] with implication US tacitly supporting.

In my opinion this plot had at best very slight chance success. Soviet and ChiCom revelations reduced that to zero. However, they place US under suspicion which Soviets and ChiComs will undoubtedly cultivate. Our immediate problem is protect our position in face of efforts Soviets and ChiComs will surely make to involve us and to portray themselves as true friends this country. First public repercussion appeared in Sihanouk's speech at Kampot Saturday,[3] reported that evening on radio in Cambodian and noon today in French. Clearly referring to Thailand, he said military chief neighboring country trying stop progress Khmer nation; suppported by "who knows what giant", this country encourages opponents of regime within and without Cambodia in attempt divide people.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/1–1259. Secret; Niact; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Also sent niact to CINCPAC and to Vientiane and repeated priority to Bangkok and Saigon.

[2] Sam Sary was a former Cambodian Ambassador to the United Kingdom. After being recalled from London under a cloud of personal scandal, he went into opposition against Sihanouk and became a proponent of pro-Western neutralism. After Sihanouk's Kampot speech, Sam Sary escaped to Thailand, and the Cambodian Government arrested many of his followers. On February 3 and 7, President Eisenhower was alerted to apparent coup plotting and Sihanouk's knowledge of it and his intention to denounce it as Western-inspired. The President was informed that a coordinated South Vietnamese and Thai effort expected Dap Chhuon, "a war lord in Western Cambodia," to join the plot. (Synopsis of Intelligence and State material prepared by John Eisenhower, January 3 and 7; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] January 10.

[*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] However, in view Soviet-ChiCom letter to Prince, I believe we must take every step convince [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] GVN of utter folly continuing support plot. Not only should we obtain their assurance that they are no longer sponsoring it as governments but it should be pointed out our common interests require they police their respective territories to prevent continued development this conspiracy within their borders. It seems to me complete suppression of plot offers us best possibility protecting our position in Cambodia, which is in common interest of US, GVN [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

It should also be pointed out to GVN [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that their own crude security practices have undoubtedly been responsible for this leak. They should be warned to examine their security precautions carefully to avoid any further revelations to our enemies.

Sihanouk's reference to "who know what giant" in his Kampot speech Saturday was a thinly-veiled accusation that we are at least silent partners in the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] GVN Sam Sary plot. We should probably ignore it if no more reference is made to it. However, if more is made of it, I believe I should go to Sihanouk to ask what he had in mind when he made statement attributed to him on radio. I would propose in such a conversation to say that I have heard rumors of plots to overthrow regime on and off during my whole stay here; that I have consistently believed they represented more wishful thinking of disgruntled exiles; that I believe regime too solidly entrenched to be in danger from such plots, if they exist; that I am nevertheless deeply disturbed if anyone believes any such plot to be supported by US; that I wish to affirm without reservation our continued support of Royal Government;[4] that I deny categorically any and all rumors that we have lent any support to any plot to overthrow it; that I believe this affirmation of position to be clearly supported by our record of performance in this country over period of several years; and that it is my opinion that persons who spread rumors casting doubt on this position are deliberately trying to poison atmosphere of SE Asia and isolate Cambodia from West.

Instructions requested Niact.[5]

Strom

[4] Ambassador Johnson queried whether it was wise to assure Sihanouk of contined U.S. support in light of his involvement with China. He recommended a categorical denial of U.S. support for Cambodian dissidents. (Telegram 1713 from Bangkok, January 13; Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/1–1359; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Instructions were sent to Strom through non-Department of State channels to inform Sihanouk that the United States not involved in Cambodian internal affairs. These instructions are summarized in a briefing memorandum from Kocher to Robert-

Continued

94. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, January 26, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Cambodian Reply Regarding Coup Plot and Attendant Rumors

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. Walter S. Robertson—Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
The Honorable Nong Kimny—Ambassador of Cambodia
Mr. Eric Kocher—Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs
Mr. Laurin B. Askew—Officer in Charge, Cambodian Affairs

Ambassador Nong Kimny referred to the concern expressed by Mr. Robertson in their previous conversations on January 16 and January 21 concerning rumors and public statements implying US involvement in a plot to overthrow the Sihanouk government (see memoranda of conversation of January 16 and January 21).[2]

The Ambassador then stated he had been instucted to inform Mr. Robertson as follows:

a) The Royal Cambodian Government (RKG) had in its possession documents proving that a plot against the government and the Throne existed and that it had been organized by a few members of the opposition.

b) The RKG had received advance information concerning the plot, not only from representatives of the Communist countries, but also from a representative of a certain Western nation.

c) The RKG wished to give assurances that it had never made any statement about Col. Lansdale or about Sam Sary's taking refuge in the U.S. Embassy. Any rumors concerning these matters did not originate from the RKG.

d) Prince Sihanouk and the RKG were disturbed by the fact that a meeting in Bangkok of persons responsible for the plot did not come to the attention of the US Embassy in Bangkok, and would be more disturbed if US authorities in Bangkok did know about the meeting and did not pass this information to the RKG.

Ambassador Nong Kimny then emphasized that the foregoing was exactly what he had been instructed to say. He added that he personally realized that the immediately preceding statement (d. above) would be questioned, namely, why should anyone think the

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son, January 16; Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Coup Plots Jan–Dec 1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/1–2059. Confidential. Drafted by Laurin B. Askew and approved by Kocher and Robertson.

[2] In the discussion with Nong Kimny on January 16, Robertson expressed friendly concern over Sihanouk's allegations. In the conversation on January 21, Robertson said he would have to lodge "the strongest official protest" if reports of Sihanouk's charges were accurate. (Memoranda of conversation, January 16 and 21; *ibid.*, 751H.11/1–1959 and 751H.11/1–2159; both included in the microfiche supplement)

US Embassy in Bangkok knows about everything going on in that city? Nevertheless, he continued, the RKG had received information on the meeting, which leads the Cambodians to believe many other people in Bangkok were aware of it. Nong Kimny asserted that from his own experience in Bangkok as an officer of the French Embassy, he knew that the large Embassies there were aware of many things. He then mentioned that the RKG had lately heard rumors to the effect that Cambodian opposition elements were trying to establish contact with the US Embassy at Bangkok, but that the suggestions of those opposition elements were not being taken into consideration by US officials there.

Mr. Robertson remarked that Prince Sihanouk already had made a public statement in which he asserted the US must have known of the plot but did not inform the RKG. Mr. Robertson stated that we had heard of many plots over the years but that we are not in a position to evaluate such rumors, nor do we meddle in internal affairs of other countries. He then asked the Ambassador to inform Prince Sihanouk that we have exerted, and will continue to exert, every possible influence to promote good relations between Cambodia and its neighbors. He added we believe disturbances such as coup plots benefit only the Communists, not the free world. Mr. Robertson then stated the US would vigorously reject any implication, from any quarter, that the US was involved with others—Cambodians or foreigners—in an attempt to overthrow the RKG. We would wish to brand any such implication a compelte falsehood, he added.

Ambassador Nong Kimny stated he had heard nothing from his government concerning the question of police surveillance of US Embassy houses.

At the end of the meeting Mr. Robertson referred to the fact that despite repeated requests, our Ambassador at Phnom Penh had been unable to see Prince Sihanouk. He added that we were disturbed by the apparent refusal of the Prince to see our Ambassador at this time.

95. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, February 16, 1959—4 p.m.

1036. Eyes only Mr. Robertson. In his conversation with Durbrow Saturday, Diem said it was unfortunate Vietnamese public opinion was becoming more apprehensive about US support of Sihanouk who obviously tended favor ChiComs while Vietnam was true friend of US.

This question of relative worthiness of Vietnam and Cambodia to receive US support has beclouded real issue for months. On basis its record Vietnam is clearly the more worthy. However this is not question at issue nor has it been during last eight months.

Point at issue is that the Western objective of denying all of Southeast Asia to Communist control cannot be achieved without establishment of some modus vivendi among Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, but particularly between Vietnam and Cambodia. We have for months pressed on GVN necessity of coming to understanding with Cambodia during which time rumors of GVN intrigues in Cambodia have been rife in area. Intelligence [*1 line of source text not declassified*] two months after Stung Treng incident revealed GVN was even at that time planning coup d'état to overthrow Sihanouk and desisted only when it became apparent it would not have US support. Evidence of more recent GVN support to Sam Sary plot and now to Dap Chhuon is conclusive. The countries supporting Western cause in SEA have been in position of football team with two quarterbacks calling opposite signals.

We have similarly had policy differences with Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek and it has been necessary impose our point of view on them. I fervently believe a similar action is necessary with Diem and that it must be taken very soon if we are to avoid a disaster. As pointed out in previous telegrams, any hostile action against Cambodia originating in either Vietnam or Thailand would almost certainly be followed by a flood of protest notes from Peiping, Moscow and Afro-Asian capitals. Soviets will be able to bring issue to UN where we might be compelled take position against a SEATO ally. There would in addition be threat of Red Chinese military intervention lurking in background. Whether or not this threat became real would depend in large measure on unpredictable vagaries of Sihanouk's behavior.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–1659. Secret; Priority; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

I am most anxious if possible have this issue resolved before my departure 10 days hence. On very day we received our important intelligence concerning Vietnamese activities in support Dap Chhuon, I had already asked for farewell audiences with King and Queen and other members Royal family and for departure interviews with Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. I have passed point of no return as far as departure is concerned but I should be exceedingly distressed to have this issue hanging fire at time I leave.

Quite apart from this consideration, which is largely subjective, there is very real danger of revelations day by day which may cause an explosion. Discovery of Sam Sary plot by Soviets, Chinese, French and ourselves is adequate testimony to looseness of Vietnamese security. As far as Vietnam's involvement with Dap Chhuon is concerned, there must be many people who know about shipment of mobile broadcasting station from Saigon to Siem Reap for use by Dap Chhuon in making his intended announcement to Cambodian people. Chances are that a considerable number also know about the shipment of the box of bars of gold to Dap Chhuon. The effort to increase Son Ngoc Thanh's force in Thailand from 500 to 2,000 men cannot be done secretly. (In telegram yesterday[2] I asked for review this problem with possibility additional representations Bangkok.) We may be faced any day by an RKG announcement of GVN involvement and with accompanying questions as to what we have been doing about it.

I believe we must insist in a most categorical manner that GVN break off all relations with Dap Chhuon conspiracy, including replacement of Ngo Trong Hieu, and that GVN simultaneously take positive steps for settlement of its principal differences with Cambodia.

Strom

[2] Not further identified.

96. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, February 18, 1959—5:21 p.m.

712. From Robertson. Your 1036.[2]

1. I understand and share your concern over damaging effects GVN involvement Cambodian coup plotting. [*7½ lines of source text not declassified*]

2. Although not convinced GVN will stop all support Dap Chhuon, I believe that US representations already made at various levels will discourage GVN for the moment and induce further caution as indicated by Diem reference to Hieu taking leave. Lacking further evidence continued GVN interference Cambodia and view alleged Sihanouk press statement reported Djakarta's 2558, repeated Phnom Penh 20,[3] another approach to GVN now promises have little additional restraining effect, but might easily antagonize Diem to detriment US interests.

3. On broader plane, added US pressure to coordinate Thai and Vietnamese policy toward Cambodia with that of US most likely to founder on age old regional animosities and sensitivities regarding national sovereignty, which equally as strong in Thailand and Viet-Nam as in Cambodia. Furthermore, US arguments in favor dealing with Sihanouk frequently undermined by Sihanouk's erratic and emotional behavior which particularly over past year has served merely confirm Vietnamese and Thai distrust. Thailand and Viet-Nam are not amenable to US policy dictates, particularly on matters close to home which they feel themselves better qualified to judge than US. Vietnamese in particular hold view that Sihanouk drifting rapidly toward Communist bloc, that US efforts to stem trend unsuccessful, and that prompt removal Sihanouk regime only hope avert Communist satellization Cambodia.

4. I fear we cannot dissuade Vietnamese from these opinions which shared in large measure by Thai. Recent Sihanouk statements Djakarta will undoubtedly serve reinforce Thai and Vietnamese antagonism.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–1659. Secret; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Kocher and by Robertson and Parsons in draft, and approved by Cumming.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] In this telegram, February 17, the Embassy reported an interview with Sihanouk in Djakarta on February 14 in which Sihanouk charged SEATO with "gross and open interference in Cambodia" and named Ngo Trong Hieu as the "head of foreign subversion in Cambodia." (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–1758)

5. For time being we can expect at best to restrain Thai and Vietnamese from ill-advised moves involving high risks international complications. I believe our representations at Bangkok and Saigon have reached optimum pitch at present to achieve this result.

6. I fully appreciate your wish settle this vexing problem before leaving Phnom Penh. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*] I would welcome your further comments after weighing all available information including import of Sihanouk's Djakarta declarations and of cabinet resignation. However, I fear that we must reckon with this problem for a long time to come.

Herter

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97. Editorial Note

On February 20, General Dap Chhuon sent a letter informing Queen Kossamak that he was going into opposition against the government to protect the throne. On the night of February 21, Prime Minister Sihanouk dispatched troops and armored personnel carriers to Siem Reap. They took control of the town and captured Dap Chhuon's forces without firing a shot, but Dap Chhuon managed to escape. Subsequently he was captured while trying to cross into Thailand on March 3 and apparently died of wounds inflicted during his capture. (Telegram ARMA CX–40 from Phnom Penh, February 23; telegram 1085 from Phnom Penh, February 23; and telegram 1175 from Phnom Penh, March 5; Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2359, 751H.00/2–2359, and 751H.00/3–559, respectively) For Sihanouk's own account of this plot, see Norodom Sihanouk as related to Wilfred Burchett, *My War With the CIA: The Memoirs of Prince Norodom Sihanouk* (New York, 1972), pages 104–109.

President Eisenhower was informed of the coup and its failure on February 24. (Synopsis of State and intelligence material; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries)

98. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, February 21, 1959—2 p.m.

1074. For Robertson. Last time I saw Sihanouk he told me that he had information concerning plot having as object overthrow present regime and his assassination; that he had received information from number independent sources, all of which agreed; and that source included Soviet, Red Chinese, and a Western Embassy. He observed our intelligence resources must be just as good as those of these three Embassies. He asked if we did not have information on plot and, if we did, why we did not also inform him.

I have also twice been questioned almost identical fashion by Son Sann and have reported my replies.

In making farewell calls on Prince and Son Sann next week, I anticipate possibility being reminded these conversations and being asked if we have taken any steps to verify existence of plot.

If thus questioned, I plan reply that US not in slightest degree involved in any way at all in any action against regime or him personally; that we would never condone foreign interference of any kind in internal affairs Cambodia, especially interference having as object destruction regime; that our policy this repect well-known and dramatically demonstrated in Suez affair; that our position would be along same lines if similar situation arose here; that we had found there were certain disaffected individuals who had sought to enlist support of misguided persons abroad; that whole affair had object driving wedge between RKG and ourselves; and that we are taking what steps we can to correct situation.

I am not happy about this line and realize ability make last statement will depend on Department's evaluation of whole situation and of what additional measures may be decided upon to make plot wither on vine.

I applied for Sihanouk and Son Sann appointments February 12 and doubtful now I shall be called by either one before Tuesday. However, in spite Monday holiday should appreciate dispatch reply by Monday night.

Strom

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2159. Secret; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

99. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, February 21, 1959—8:38 p.m.

732. From Parsons. Your 1074.[2] I fully appreciate your desire take strongest possible line with RKG but believe it unwise you use points suggested fourth para reftel because they imply US willingness assume responsibility internal Cambodian security despite our oft repeated stress on non-involvement RKG affairs. Suggest rather you follow previous Dept. guidance this subject transmitted another channel earlier this month[3] as supplemented below.

a) US not in slightest degree involved alleged Cambodian coup plots.

b) US position against foreign interference domestic affairs other countries well known and matter of record.

c) US not in position obtain accurate advance information foreign meddling, if any, in coup plots Cambodia. US not privy intrigues this nature and view well-known US position on noninterference, any individuals with designs against RKG would take care US not informed their plans.

d) You may assure RKG emphatically that US has exerted strongest possible efforts and influence to promote amicable relations between Cambodia and its neighbors.[4]

e) Apparent Cambodian suspicions re US position this matter difficult for us to understand. We can only assume they inspired by efforts our enemies to destroy mutual confidence between Cambodia and US. They evidently attempting attribute to US own motives and actions including subversion Cambodian institutions.

f) It is difficult for us to believe Cambodians would seriously credit accusations against US from such sources. Suggest such calumnies be reexamined against demonstrable record US support for Cambodian independence, respect for Cambodian neutrality and friendship for RKG.

g) US concern at Cambodian suspicion US plotting against regime again conveyed Nong Kimny early this week. US surprised that Cambodia which would reject any attempted American dictation apparently believes US could dictate to other sovereign countries if it had evidence they involved in activities of nature suggested. If RKG still

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2159. Secret; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Kocher and Parsons, and approved by Cumming.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Not found.

[4] In telegram 1080 from Phnom Penh, February 22, Strom argued that this suggested guidance was an "inadequate defense" of the U.S. position in view of the fact that Sihanouk had fully verified information on South Vietnamese participation in the attempted coup and "in view further fact GVN has little capability menace RKG except by virtue resources supplied by US." (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2959)

wonders why US does not provide info on rumored plots, it should be remembered US policy avoids interference internal matters. Any other course now would be likely give cause for recriminations later and would be incompatible principle mutual self-respect. In any event US has no basis for evaluating latest spate of rumors and does not wish add to existing tensions and confusion by accepting at face value fragmentary and unconfirmed reports.

Herter

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100. Letter From Prime Minister Sihanouk to President Eisenhower[1]

Phnom Penh, February 23, 1959.

MR. PRESIDENT: I have not forgotten the cordiality of the welcome which you were so kind as to extend to me during my stay in your country last fall and it is because I believe I shall find comprehension and sympathy in you that I write you today to explain to you the gravity of the situation Cambodia.

My country, Mr. President, is a friend of long standing of the great American democracy. Like the US it detests oppression in all its forms and it can only voice its approval of the desire to which you gave expression in your last message on the State of the Union for a world "community of strong nations, stable and independent, where the ideas of liberty of justice and human dignity can thrive".

Cambodia is not, as some have at times attempted to make me appear to say, boldly falsifying my thoughts, an enemy of SEATO, of which the US is one of the principal animating forces. We understand perfectly that our Asiatic neighbors make such agreements among themselves and great friendly powers to better defend themselves against Communist subversion. The fact that we do not belong to SEATO does not entitle us to criticize the organization as such. I add that we have full sympathy for the national regimes of other countries and that, although neutral (for special reasons), we do not proselytize

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2359. Confidential; Niact. Transmitted to the Department of State in telegram 1088, which noted that Son Sann requested transmission of the letter by cable and that a "reply be given with least possible delay." Telegram 1088, which is the source text, was repeated priority to Saigon and Bangkok, niact to CINCPAC, and to Vientiane.

for neutrality. Neither, in the final analysis, does Communism have any attraction for us, which up to the present has not succeeded in taking root in our ancient nation, monarchist, socialist, and nationalist.

However, our small, pacific country whose Army numbers scarcely 30 thousand men and whose Air Force and Navy are purely symbolic, is the object of grave threats of aggression on the part of neighbors both larger and more powerful. Rebel troops and brigands are concentrated on our frontiers on the west and on the east and are supplied with modern arms, a small party of these troops has already penetrated into our western provinces.

A very large sum of money has been given to the Commander of one of our military regions, that he may declare himself autonomously, whose arms are delivered to him by foreign planes, and we have had no other recourse than to send the Royal Forces to enforce respect for our national integrity. We have discovered in our capital and in our provinces the existence of a vast network of subversion fed by our neighbors with the aim of forming a puppet government ready to align itself to their policy and to give its consent to various concessions. These facts, Mr. President, are certainly not known to you. Because of their extreme gravity and because of the fact that they threaten our national government, twice approved by the people in free elections, I dare to solicit the speedy intervention of the friendly government of the US of America with our Thai and South Vietnamese neighbors, so that they will return to a policy of good-will and loyal neighborliness toward us. I know, Mr. President, that the Government of the US considers our neighbors as sovereign states into whose affairs it does not wish to inject itself. I wish to point out, however, that the strength of those countries is derived from the assistance which they obtain from the US which makes available to them, in addition to its moral support, large credits and important armaments for the purpose of defending their independence against Communist subversion.

The US is in my opinion twice entitled to make its voice heard. First of all, as a firm supporter of the United Nations (whose seat is on its territory) and whose constant doctrine is respect for the sovereignty and the integrity of its member states. Next, in order to see to it that the credits and arms which it turns over to nations in order to protect themselves from the Red menace are not unrightly used to support territorial and political ambitions or policies against non-Communist neighbors.

The Ambassador of the United States of America in Cambodia did not believe—and rightly—that he was interfering in our affairs when he pointed out to us that his country would not permit us to use arms which we had obtained from it against our neighbors. I ask you to have your representatives to our neighbors take the same position.

I am ready to go to great lengths to reassure the latter, and American opinion as well, to whom it has often been said that Cambodia lives under a "dictatorship" and does not approve the policy of neutrality which I am supposed to "impose" upon it.

I am ready to resign with all my government, to dissolve our National Assembly, and to call the people to new elections, in which all the parties in opposition to the Sangkum Reastr Niyum, over which I preside, will be able to participate freely—even those of MM Sam Sary and Son Ngoc Thanh.

I suggest that these elections be held under the control of the United Nations and that among the observers named by this organization be included the Thais and, although South Vietnam is not yet a member of the UN, also the South Vietnamese.

I think that in this way no one will be able any longer to have doubt about the will of our people. I commit myself, moreover, to withdraw from politics if views hostile to the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and to neutrality should obtain the majority. I think that American opinion, and you primarily, will recognize the fairness of this democratic proposition.

The very great confidence I have in you, Mr. President, the respect which I have for your eminent qualities as a statesman and an unquestioned leader of the free world, make me hope that you will be willing to attach special importance to the anguished appeal which I address to you in my country's name.

I am certain that you will not permit a small country, friendly to yours, friendly to all the larger democratic nations, to be the object of an aggression encouraged by your allies and that you will know, with all the firmness which everyone admires in you, how to cause the very grave threat which weighs on us to recede.

Only the intervention of the United States of America can save the free Khmer democracy from an unjust and unmerited subversion, entirely artificial and mounted from without, as elections organized under the most severe international control would clearly demonstrate.

If, although I can not imagine it, this intervention should not lead to satisfactory results, I ask you to give us at least the means to defend ourselves by ourselves, without having to solicit them from other nations.

America, in whose wisdom and friendship I want to believe, can not let us be erased, by its silence, from the map of free nations nor let us slip into an anarchy from which the [garble] would be the only ones to profit.

I ask you, Mr. President, to excuse this plea, which may be too impassioned, which I have presented to you in the name of my people. I have faith in your sense of justice, you who have evoked "the shining prospect of seeing man build a world where all will be able to live in dignity."

I beg you to accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Norodom Sihanouk[3]
President of the Council of Ministers of Cambodia[4]

[3] Telegram 1088 bears this typed signature.

[4] In telegram 1090 from Phnom Penh, February 23, Strom asked for a very prompt reply, if only an interim one, to avoid the possibility of Sihanouk turning elsewhere before hearing from the United States. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

101. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

Washington, February 23, 1959—7:55 p.m.

1358. Phnom Penh 1080,[2] 1083,[3] and 1085.[4]

1. Because GVN still apparently supporting Dap Chhuon, we agree we should again approach Diem re extremely delicate situation Cambodia. In addition strongly reemphasizing points made your last approach, request Amb. Durbrow remind GVN its commitment in MS agreement against use equipment provided by US for purposes other than defense against aggression and also utilization such equipment against RKG or transfer thereof to Cambodian dissidents could have grave effect future MAP. Furthermore as GVN capability interfere in

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2359. Secret; Niact; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Drafted by Kocher and Askew, cleared by Parsons and Robertson, and approved by Cumming. Also sent niact to Phnom Penh and repeated priority to Bangkok.

[2] See footnote 4, Document 99.

[3] In telegram 1083, February 23, the Embassy transmitted the text of a communiqué issued by the Cambodian Government, also on February 23, detailing its foiling of the Dap Chhuon coup. The communiqué explicitly stated that, Dap Chhuon had been recruited and supplied by an unnamed South Vietnamese diplomat resident in Cambodia. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2358)

[4] In telegram 1085, February 23, Strom filled in details of the failed Dap Chhuon coup and Sihanouk's reaction. Strom also informed the Department that he had learned that Sihanouk planned to send Eisenhower a personal letter. When meeting Son Sann, Strom reported that he planned to assure the Cambodian leader that the United States was not involved in the plot. (*Ibid.*)

Cambodia not solely attributable US assistance Durbrow authorized once again inform GVN that such interference by it is not matter which affects Viet-Nam and Cambodia alone but one which could gravely affect peace and stability all of SEA. View disclosure Vietnamese aid Dap Phnom Penh's 1083, we view consequences possible strong reaction from GVN with particular concern. Durbrow should urge Diem adopt moderate attitude toward current developments Cambodia, disavow if possible alleged South Vietnamese officers aiding Dap, and promptly withdraw Hieu who now obviously can no longer play useful role Cambodia. Mention to Diem we have no indication as yet Sihanouk has appealed or planning appeal to ChiComs for assistance, and therefore all the more important at present crucial juncture GVN refrain from actions or statements which would tend push Sihanouk further toward Communists and seriously prejudice salvaging free world position Cambodia.

2. Finally, assuming truth of RKG allegation that GVN officers implicated Dap plot, Durbrow should stress to Diem that whole unfortunate affair has served give ChiComs propaganda asset discredit both GVN and its friends as well as helped undermine whole pro-West position Cambodia. Since our Embassy has received repeated disclaimers in past from various GVN officials re GVN involvement, Durbrow may wish to state US regrets apparent lack of trust which prevented GVN from consulting frankly with US this matter. Furthermore if GVN did indeed encourage Dap in his dissidence result has been to discredit and remove from position of power one of leading pro-free world influences in Cambodia.

3. Re Durbrow suggestion that Amb. Strom tell Sihanouk US will not countenance any action by GVN aimed at overthrowing Sihanouk regime, we recognize advantages as well as serious dangers this proposal. We realize that such statement to Sihanouk would (a) serve reassure him perhaps more than any other single action we have yet taken that not only US not involved in coup attempt but we are prepared also to pressure our allies to stop any such attempts they may be planning; and (b) if Strom statement to Sihanouk gets back to Diem, which seems likely, it may serve as most effective deterrent yet conceived for stopping GVN plots.

4. At same time we are seriously concerned by placing this kind of weapon in irresponsible hands of Sihanouk. Such statement made by Strom would indicate to Sihanouk US had been and still is aware of GVN plots thereby confirming his suspicions US and GVN involvement. Statement such as this in Sihanouk's hands could be used by him against GVN to weaken Diem and would certainly result in severe strain in US–GVN relations. In other words, we might well be placed in position of strengthening Sihanouk at cost of weakening our ally and straining relations between our two countries. Such statement

would also place US in anomalous position taking sides in this affair not with but against staunch ally and anti-Communist and in favor of unreliable Sihanouk who on this occasion has right on his side.

5. Furthermore, we frankly doubt US capacity to stop all GVN action against Sihanouk over indefinite period of time unless we are prepared to use sanctions such as aid reduction to force Diem accept our position this matter. This of course would again weaken GVN and lay ground work for increased Communist influence in South Viet-Nam, a situation which we certainly are unable to countenance. Dislike between RKG and GVN so intense Diem may well continue plot against Sihanouk despite representations which we may make to him and apparent failure past attempts. One result might be for Diem seek deeper cover as Strom mentioned recently. Therefore, on balance we believe it would not be advisable for Strom make statement to Prince suggested by Durbrow to effect US would not countenance any action by GVN aimed at overthrow Sihanouk regime.

6. Re last para Phnom Penh's 1085, we agree Strom's proposed representation Sihanouk along lines existing instructions (Deptel 732).[5] If appropriate occasion arises (possibly in answer Sihanouk charge US aid permitting GVN interference Cambodia) Strom may care remind Sihanouk equipment supplied by US used by RKG to resist reported Dap Chhuon threat to public order and protect security RKG. Strom may add that US aid to RKG continuing which attests to continued US support Cambodia.

7. We agree (Saigon's 1741)[6] it desirable talk firmly to Sihanouk in interests future tranquility SEA. Accordingly believe Strom should also remind Sihanouk:

(a) As leader of SEA country Sihanouk must recognize his own responsibility to maintain peace and friendly relations that area. Substance and trend his recent actions and statements—such as recognition Communist China, and fulsome praise ChiComs—inevitably give rise genuine fear on part Cambodia's neighbors that Sihanouk's professed neutrality wavering and that he is permitting increase Commie influence in area thus threatening peace and independence all countries of SEA. Sihanouk should realize he is in minority in accepting ChiCom friendship at face value as well as purity ChiCom motivation.

(b) Such attitude on part Sihanouk completely undermines efforts of US and others to promote friendly relations between Cambodia and neighbors.

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[5] Document 99.

[6] In telegram 1741, February 20, the Embassy in Saigon reported that South Vietnamese leaders were incensed by Sihanouk's interview (see footnote 3, Document 96). The Embassy also reported that the French had agreed to use their influence in Phnom Penh to get Sihanouk to make a conciliatory gesture toward South Vietnam. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/2–2059)

8. Request Amb. Strom's advice whether he should defer departure view potential dangers US interests in current situation.

Herter

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102. Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the President[1]

Washington, February 25, 1959.

SUBJECT

Interim Reply to Letter from Prince Sihanouk[2]

Ambassador Strom at Phnom Penh, Cambodia, has recommended that an interim response to Prince Sihanouk's letter of February 23 to you be sent as quickly as possible. I concur in this recommendation, since I believe a prompt acknowledgement will serve to reassure the Prince that his appeal has reached you and is receiving your attention. Accordingly, I enclose a suggested interim reply, which, if you approve,[3] we shall transmit telegraphically to Ambassador Strom for delivery to Prince Sihanouk.

I shall forward to you in the near future suggestions for a substantive reply to Prince Sihanouk's letter.

Christian A. Herter[4]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2559. No classification marking; Presidential Handling. Drafted by Askew.

[2] Document 100.

[3] A note on the source text indicates it was approved. This interim reply was sent to Phnom Penh in telegram 758, February 26. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2359) In telegram 760 to Phnom Penh, also February 26, the Department instructed Strom to stress to Sihanouk that his letter was being given "most active and serious consideration, but in view of its weight and the complexity of the issue, a definitive reply would require several more days." (*Ibid.*)

[4] Printed from a copy that bears this stamped signature.

Enclosure

Draft Letter From President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Sihanouk[5]

DEAR PRINCE SIHANOUK: I remember with great pleasure and satisfaction your visit to the United States last year. For this reason I particularly appreciate receiving your letter of February 23, 1959, which you asked Ambassador Strom to forward to me.

I assure you that I am giving it my earnest attention, and will reply substantively to it very soon.

With warm regard,

Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower[6]

[5] In telegram 1139 from Phnom Penh, February 28, Strom reported that he had delivered the interim reply and told Sihanouk that a more substantive reply would be coming in a few days. Sihanouk said he appreciated that a full reply would take time and he was quite prepared to wait. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2-2859)

[6] Printed from a copy that bears this stamped signature.

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103. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, February 26, 1959—5 p.m.

1107. Reference: Embassy telegram Presidential Handling 1088.[2] Despite discouraging aspects situation, believe we can still prevent Cambodia slipping further to left. Full views this subject expressed to Department most recently in despatch 289 of February 17, 1959.[3] Fact that Sihanouk turned to us in his distress is significant. I believe he is acting in good faith. I hope at least an interim reply in affirmative tone can be given soon. Since Prince gave British, French and Australian Ambassadors copies letter I have discussed it with them.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2-2559. Secret; Priority; Presidential Handling.

[2] See Document 100.

[3] Included in the microfiche supplement. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/2-1359)

Gorce agrees with me on basic anti-Communist orientation Cambodia but like me foresees long and difficult period of insecurity as result Dap Chhuon dissidence. In spite earlier reports, it seems clear considerable number his men stayed with him although Puth Chay, Commander Kompong Thom in Fourth Region, has allegedly rallied to government with two companies. Dap Chhuon can be made nearly impotent if supplies can be denied him but this will require active cooperation Thais and Vietnamese. Even if this should be obtained, danger exists Red China or Viet Minh will find means of supplying him simply to continue insecurity and disorder. There is also danger that scattered groups in other provinces will be encouraged by Dap Chhoun example to go in for banditry. Prospect this regard is not attractive.

Australian Stuart believes U.S. must respond affirmatively to Sihanouk despite obvious difficulties ahead. He is emphatically of opinion Sihanouk [letter?] to President represents West's last chance hold country with government in its present form. British Garner is in essential agreement with Stuart.

Jean Barre, French editor for *Realites Cambodgiennes* and close confidant of Prince has supplied commentary on statement to *Antara.* Barrett, Chief Political Section, has called on him many times but yesterday for first time Barre came to see Barrett.

Barre's immediate object was to obtain, if possible, text of statement issued by *Antara* quoting Sihanouk's remarks about SEATO. Text was given to him. Barre read statement and said Prince would be extremely angry about it and that there would be a public denial.

Barre indicated he had been one of authors of letter to President and was fully cognizant of Prince's motives in writing it. He stressed Prince's complete sincerity and genuine feeling desperation in case of negative U.S. response. Barre stated Prince realized appeal to Peking would mean end monarchy but this might be necessary to prevent split Cambodia between Vietnam and Thailand. Barre quoted Prince as saying, "President Eisenhower is our only salvation. There are other solutions but there is no other salvation". Prince anticipates possibility guerrilla warfare and serious insecurity in Cambodia.

Barrett and Barre discussed difference between this appeal to U.S. which was submitted without publicity and appeal last summer in case of Stung Treng incident which was given maximum publicity. Barre stated that Prince would not make this appeal public until clear U.S. would give negative response.

Barre also gave impression (as had Son Sann in my interview yesterday) Prince's fear his remarks re SEATO in Djakarta might prejudice U.S. reply his letter. Prince apparently plans make public denial these remarks in hope appease Washington feelings.

Barre further commented that Prince planned to make statement soon that in his opinion RTG had pulled out of Bangkok plot since resumption relations but that certain initiatives had been set in motion which RTG could no longer control.

Request Department in its discretion pass Bangkok, Saigon.

Strom

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104. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, February 28, 1959—5 p.m.

1140. Reference: Deptel 761.[2]

My conversation with Sihanouk noon today was first one following his presentation evidence Dap Chhuon plot Siem Reap February 26.[3] [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*] Furthermore, since it appears likely much of Sihanouk's information about Dap Chhuon plot came from Red Chinese Ambassador I had to take into account that he probably feels indebted to Chinese for helping him break up plot which had his assassination as one object. Accordingly while holding to my instructions I spoke as follows:

I said I was profoundly shocked by what he had showed diplomatic corps at Siem Reap; that fortunately Dap Chhuon plot was discovered in time and government was able suppress it; and that I hoped MAAG's contribution to effectiveness FARK had been element in government success. Sihanouk said trouble was not over yet by any means and that dissident forces were being assembled in Thailand and also at Loc Ninh Vietnam to continue action against Cambodia. I continued that, in events leading up to suppression of plot, it appeared from all evidence presented that Cambodia has been aggrieved party and that it was my hope he would not use this fact to aggravate

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/2–2859. Secret; Limited Distribution. Repeated to Saigon and Bangkok.

[2] In telegram 761, February 26, the Department instructed Strom to make an oral démarche to Sihanouk when delivering President Eisenhower's interim reply of February 26. The proposed text of the démarche was sent from Strom through another channel and has not been found. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/2–2658)

[3] Sihanouk took the entire diplomatic corps, including South Vietnam's representative, Ngo Trong Hieu, to Siem Reap on February 26 where he gave them a full exposition of the plot by Dap Chhuon, a tour of Dap Chhuon's house, and a look at the material evidence of the attempted coup. Strom reported on the trip in telegram 1122 from Phnom Penh, Feburary 26. (*Ibid.*, 123–Strom, Carl W.)

situation further. I said US Government's firm position was that modus vivendi among SEA nations was an absolute must; that I could assure him we had never ceased our energetic efforts to work for amicable relations in area through our Embassies in Bangkok and Saigon; that forbearance on Cambodia's part at this point would be a great contribution to eventual settlement of SEA problems; and that he as leader of an SEA country, while defending his country, must not lose sight of his responsibility for maintenance peace and friendly relations in area.

Sihanouk broke in to say that he did not agree that he had a regional responsibility; that his reponsibility was toward Cambodia; that he would do his utmost to defend Cambodia in any situation and that Cambodia being the smallest of three countries, would certainly not be the aggressor. He added that things had happened recently in Thailand that he appreciated. For example a certain Thai magazine had prepared a full-scale attack on Cambodia and on himself personally and Thai Government had suppressed it. He was more optimistic with regard to his relations with Thai Government at present. In same breath he said that it was not of course, same with GVN.

Continuing, I referred to fact that in his letter to President Eisenhower, he had twice used words "Communist subversion". He commented there is no more Communist subversion in Cambodia than in Thailand and Vietnam. I said in any event this Communist subversion to which he had referred was felt to be a very real danger in neighboring countries of SEA, and statements such as that attributed to him by *Antara* Djakarta caused real alarm in some places and placed additional obstacles in way our efforts promote better regional relations. I said I was therefore glad he had decided to publish denial that appeared *Realites Cambodgiennes* today (Embtel 1120).[4] He pointed out it was not a denial but a correction. I agreed and said I hoped he would in other corrections show same spirit that he did in publishing this correction.

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[4] According to telegram 1120, February 26, Sihanouk's correction of charges of SEATO intervention and attacks against Cambodia went as follows:

"I have never criticized SEATO as such since I believe all countries entitled associate with others for purpose better assure defense. I only spoke as follows to my interviewer: 'It hard to uncover Chinese subversion, which extremely discreet and impalpable, when I must spend my time combating overt subversion which is sponsored by two countries, one of which is member of SEATO, the other aligned with policy this organism'. I thus protested against attacks our neighbors but not against 'attack by SEATO,' which would be ridiculous since we have good friends among the adherents of this pact. What I cannot accept—and what, I hope, our Western friends will not accept either—is that money and arms given our neighbors in name common defense against Communism be diverted from these ends and employed to overthrow national regime of small country, monarchist and non-Communist." (*Ibid.*, 790.5/2–2659)

In concluding I expressed hope that his problem with Vietnam could be straightened out and that he would from this point on keep problem in diplomatic channels. He responded in a way that indicated he understood importance I placed on keeping subject in diplomatic channels but did not commit himself to do so.

Sihanouk was tense at beginning conversation which lasted half hour but relaxed noticeably as it proceeded. I think Department will appreciate that it is not quite reasonable to expect Sihanouk to be enthusiastic about regional relations at present.

Strom

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105. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, March 3, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Situation in Cambodia

PARTICIPANTS

The Honorable Hervé Alphand, Ambassador of France
The Honorable Charles Lucet, Minister of France
Mr. Pierre Landy, Counselor

The Honorable Christian A. Herter, Acting Secretary
The Honorable Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
Mr. Eric Kocher, Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs
Mr. Robert H. McBride, Director, Office of Western European Affairs
Mr. L.B. Askew, Officer in Charge, Cambodian Affairs

Ambassador Alphand stated that a serious incident had recently occurred on the Thai-Cambodian frontier which appeared to be a sort of plot. Some Vietnamese elements had a part in the plot, he continued, and the French Government fears that if no quieting element is introduced Prince Sihanouk might request the protection of some neighboring country—that is, Communist China, or the latter may of its own initiative exploit the situation to "protect" Cambodia, and eventually control it. He said he knew of Sihanouk's note to President Eisenhower, that it had been acknowledged, and that no substantive reply had yet been sent. The Ambassador said he felt that the exercise of United States influence was essential to calm the situation in this

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/3–359. Secret. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Kocher, and approved by Herter on March 12.

part of the world, and that a favorable reply to Prince Sihanouk's letter could open the door to settlement of the incident. He pointed out something also should be said to President Diem to avoid a deterioration of the situation.

Governor Herter stated that we were giving serious attention to the substantive reply to Prince Sihanouk and would welcome any suggestions the Ambassador would wish to make. At the same time, Governor Herter said, he felt he should mention certain incidents which affected United States relationships with France in the area. Reading from his notes, he stated, " . . . [2] French Ambassador Gorce at Phnom Penh (as well as the USSR and ChiCom representatives) informed Prince Sihanouk of the 'Sam Sary plot' in January without previously advising our Ambassador of his action. Furthermore, Ambassador Gorce managed to be on the scene at Siem Reap when the Cambodian army force arrived to apprehend dissident General Dap Chhuon; in this case also, Ambassador Gorce chose not to inform our Ambassador until after the fact. Finally, Ambassador Gorce sent a summary of Sihanouk's letter to the President to his French colleague in Saigon, who promptly passed the information on to President Diem without previously notifying United States representatives. These actions appear not to have been calculated to advance the cause of common Western interests in the area." When he had finished reading, the Acting Secretary stated this was really putting the case mildly since these actions, particularly the French approach to President Diem regarding the letter, had placed us in a very embarrassing position. Returning to the substantive matter, Governor Herter stated that we share the French concern over the situation and regard it as particularly delicate since it involves three friendly countries, and entails the danger of Chinese Communist intervention. He added that the United States hoped it would be possible to prevent a deterioration of the situation and then asked Mr. Roberston if he had any comments to make.

Mr. Robertson said he had little to add to the Acting Secretary's remarks, except that we had made the strongest possible representations to all three countries concerned in an attempt to persuade them to resolve the age-old problems underlying the current difficulties. He said that Thailand and Viet-Nam undoubtedly were genuinely concerned over Prince Sihanouk's growing relations with the Communists which the neighboring countries regarded as a serious threat to them. He recalled that early last year Prince Sihanouk publicly (in *Realites Cambodgiennes*) indicted the Communist threat, citing Communist attempts to subvert priests and other elements of Cambodian society. Then suddenly Sihanouk had recognized the Peiping regime and it

[2] Ellipsis in the source text.

was only natural, Mr. Robertson added, that the Thai and Vietnamese would become concerned that the Communists might envelop Sihanouk before he knew it. We agree with the French, Mr. Robertson continued, that anything which creates bad feelings among these countries is against free world interests and we have done everything in our power to avoid an intensification of these difficulties. He then mentioned that not only Ambassador Gorce at Phnom Penh but also the Communist representatives had told Sihanouk of the Sam Sary plot and the latter furthermore had accused the United States of involvement.

Ambassador Alphand replied that he believed the French had also been accused of complicity because some French arms had been uncovered. Mr. Robertson replied that according to our information the Cambodians have used France's action in informing Sihanouk of the plot to show what a bad friend the United States has been.

Ambassador Alphand then stated that the United States and France must work together in this problem and that he would report the lack of cooperation which the Acting Secretary had mentioned to Paris, although he had had the impression that our respective Ambassadors at Phnom Penh were the best of friends.

Mr. Robertson stated that also had been our impression and we, therefore, had been all the more surprised at the actions of Ambassador Gorce. When Ambassador Alphand said he thought Gorce had warned Strom of the plot, Mr. Robertson replied that this warning had come only after the fact and that Gorce had not seen fit to advise our Ambassador that he intended to inform Sihanouk.

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106. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, March 3, 1959—8 p.m.

1163. Reference Saigon's 1804 to Department.[2] I agree fully with Ambassador Durbrow that Sihanouk also is due for some tough talk. However, Saigon's impression that he has never been object of force-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/3–359. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution.

[2] In telegram 1804, March 2, Durbrow suggested that when presenting the President's letter to Sihanouk, Strom should emphasize that unless the Sihanouk stopped his leftward movement and provocative statements, the United States would have to reassess its policy toward Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/3–259)

ful representation concerning danger in course he has pursued is not correct. At time of Stung Treng incident, I spoke to him firmly several times under Department's instruction. This had no effect in view fact he got no assistance from US in connection with Vietnamese incursion into Cambodian territory and displacement border marker, which it is generally agreed involved unilateral annexation of several square kilometers of Cambodian territory by GVN.

In my conversation Sam Sary–Son Ngoc Thanh and Dap Chhuon plots, I have been at disadvantage of having to concentrate on answers to "Did you know about plot?" and "If you did, why didn't you tell us?" [*2 lines of source text not declassified*] However until I am given more advantageous position from which to talk, it is going to be useless to try to impress Sihanouk with his regional responsibilities.

It is a part of "free man's burden" that we have assumed as a nation that we are many times held responsible for actions of governments we do not control. In view of complete dependence of Vietnam on US, it has been impossible convince Sihanouk and other prominent Cambodians that we were not behind certain aggressive and menacing actions of GVN during last year and half. Sihanouk and his associates are convinced that if we wanted to, we could keep Vietnam in line. I must say that this view is reasonable to the extent that our policy objectives cannot be achieved without regional harmony and actions to which Cambodians have objected are destructive of this achievement of our objectives. Following are some of incidents of past year which Cambodians have regarded as aggressive and menacing or humiliating: Abrupt GVN withdrawal from financial talks in February 1958; political kidnapping on streets of Phnom Penh, bungled by Vietnamese agents with diplomatic passports in March 1958; arrest and imprisonment for two months of 57 Cambodian peasants, many of them women and children, in April 1958; Stung Treng incident, June 1958; Sam Sary–Son Ngoc Thanh plot January 1959; and finally Dap Chhuon attempt at coup d'etat in February 1959.

Sihanouk is not a Communist and I am convinced he will not willingly allow his country come under Communist control. I am equally certain that more incidents like those above will drive him irretrievably into Communists' arms. This view has been presented at length in despatch 289 of February 17 entitled "Year-End Review of American Policy Toward Cambodia".[2]

To stem Cambodia's trend toward alignment with Communist China, three preliminary steps are necessary:

1. It must be made plain to Diem that we have conclusive evidence of his support of Sam Sary, Son Ngoc Thanh, and Dap Chhuon.

[2] See *infra*.

2. Diem must become convinced that Sihanouk is solidly entrenched in Cambodia and that he must expect to live with him.
3. He must be induced to make some positive gesture indicating reversal of policy.

US had to have showdowns with Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek and I believe time has come that similar one is necessary with Diem in his own interests as well as ours. We still have a strong position in this country but we have been prevented from taking advantage of it by being constantly held responsible for threatening actions by GVN. Once these are stopped, Cambodia's natural resistance to Communism will come into effect and we shall be in a position to take a firm stand as spokesman not only for Western position but for GVN also.

Strom

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107. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, March 12, 1959.

SUBJECT

Phnom Penh's despatch 289, "Year End Review of American Policy toward Cambodia", February 13, 1959[2]

In its despatch 289, the Embassy at Phnom Penh has summarized developments in Cambodia during 1958 in the context of United States objectives and has made recommendations for an adjustment of United States policy to stem Cambodia's drift toward the Sino-Soviet bloc. The despatch is clearly written and competently focussed on the major problem in U.S.-Cambodian relations; however, I have some definite reservations on the Embassy's recommendations.

Embassy Recommendations

The Embassy presents the following recommendations for the Department's consideration:

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 16.6 U.S. Cambodian Relations. Secret. Drafted by Askew and sent through Parsons.

[2] Included in the microfiche supplement. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 611.51H/2–1359)

1) The United States must decide to become more fully involved and more directly committed to the goal of better relations among the countries of Southeast Asia.

2) Such involvement preferably should be on a multilateral basis with the aid and support of other Free World nations for a common policy toward Cambodia. It is inferred that the support of several countries for such a common standard of behaviour toward Cambodia would bring more pressure to bear on Thailand and Viet-Nam to conform.

3) A common multilateral policy, publicly stated, should preclude improper interference in Cambodian affairs by Thailand and Viet-Nam and should be concerned primarily with preventing the development of friction between Cambodia and its neighbors. The announcement of such a policy could be made through SEATO, followed by a unilateral proclamation of adherence by Viet-Nam.

4) Should a multilateral policy not be feasible, it is suggested that the Department consider a unilateral approach to the problem which should be directed at the actual solution of disputes between Cambodia and its neighbors. For this purpose the United States would have to become more directly involved than in the past. For example, in the case of another Stung Treng-type of incident the United States would immediately offer to send observers to the scene as long as they stayed on the Cambodian side of the border. Another example cited would be a case such as that involving the return of Thai prisoners during the suspension of relations with Thailand. In an instance of this nature, the United States would agree (rather than refuse) to provide an escort officer.

The Embassy believes such involvement on the part of the United States is necessary to pre-empt the field from the Communists, thereby encouraging Cambodia to seek remedies for its problems from the Free World rather than from the Sino-Soviet bloc.

Finally, the Embassy acknowledges the risk of damaging our relations with Thailand and Viet-Nam by such a policy of deliberate United States involvement but implies that the prospect of losing Cambodia to the Communists warrants bold action on the part of the United States.

SEA Comments

I believe the Embassy has correctly analyzed the significance of developments during 1958 and that it has identified the most critical problem in our relations with Cambodia, namely disputes between that country and neighboring Free World states. However, I have some reservations on the new approach recommended by the Embassy.

In a general sense, I believe that the Embassy places disproportionate emphasis on the need for a change in Free World policy toward Cambodia and does not take fully into account the other side of the coin, namely the need for a more rational attitude on the part of

Sihanouk toward Cambodian relations with its neighbors. Admittedly, the United States has more apparent leverage to influence Thai and Vietnamese policy than it has to exert on Sihanouk. However, it is not part of United States policy to impose our concepts on any sovereign government and I believe the substance of the Embassy's recommendations is contrary to this principle. Furthermore, I believe other subsidiary dangers would be involved in the course proposed by the Embassy. For example, a United States policy of forcing Thailand and Viet-Nam into an accommodating posture toward Cambodia without requiring corresponding assurances of cooperation from Sihanouk would carry the grave risk of confirming the opinion held by Cambodians (and other neutrals) that the acceptance of United States aid and the adoption of a strong, public anti-Communist policy by a nation automatically convert it into a pliant satellite of the United States. Quite aside from the broader implications of this impression, it may well encourage Sihanouk to adopt an even more intransigent attitude toward Thailand and Viet-Nam, confident of United States willingness and ability to pressure the latter into compliance. It may also encourage Sihanouk to wield the threat of seeking more Communist support with greater impunity.

With respect to specific steps suggested by the Embassy as means of implementing a new approach, I perceive additional dangers. For example, a public announcement by SEATO of a common multilateral policy toward Cambodia would, I believe, compound the risks involved in such a common approach without materially advancing its prospects of success. Similarly, I believe that with regard to the alternative unilateral policy proposed for the United States, active involvement on our part in the various issues in dispute would inevitably entail for us the role of mediator on questions which are not susceptible to solution on the basis of technical, objective decisions. Again in this instance, United States readiness to become involved carries the risk of prompting Sihanouk to magnify minor incidents with the assurance of attracting attention and using them as leverage against Thailand and Viet-Nam.

The Embassy's selection of the Thai prisoner transfer does not appear to advance the thesis proposed, since the United States refusal to provide escorts in this instance took into account that it was not the United States but rather Burma—another Free World country—which had been designated by Bangkok to represent Thai in Cambodia during the period when relations were suspended.

The foregoing reservations notwithstanding, I believe Phnom Penh's despatch represents a thought-provoking contribution to current thinking on the most vexing problem in our relations with Cambodia.

As you know, the Department already is preparing to take positive steps to improve relations between Cambodia and its neighbors:

a) A responsive reply to Sihanouk's letter incorporating assurances from Thailand and Viet-Nam.

b) Your projected trip to the area,[3] in the course of which you may take the opportunity to emphasize to Sihanouk, as well as to leaders in Thailand and Viet-Nam, the importance of their own responsibility for an improvement in relations with their neighbors.

In a sense, these steps, while not constituting United States involvement in Cambodian disputes, should demonstrate active United States interest in the problems of the area. Furthermore, they are intended to restrain the type of irresponsible and ill-advised action by the three countries concerned which constitute a major irritant to relations among them. I believe we should be alert to other opportunities to take similar action which promises to have a balanced effect on all parties concerned, and I hope to make specific recommendations on this subject in the near future.

For the moment, however, I recommend that you may wish to talk to Ambassador Strom along the lines mentioned above.

[3] Parsons, not Robertson, went to Southeast Asia and Cambodia; see Documents 111 and 112.

108. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, March 27, 1959.

SUBJECT

Written Reply to Prince Sihanouk's Letter[2] and Supplemental Oral Message

Following consultations with the Governments of Thailand and Viet-Nam,[3] a suggested substantive reply and a supplemental oral message (Tab A) have been prepared to the letter (Tab B) addressed to the President by Prince Sihanouk on February 23, 1959. You will recall

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/3–2759. Secret. Drafted by Askew and cleared by Kocher and Parsons.

[2] Document 100.

[3] Extended consultations between the Embassies in Bangkok and Saigon and the host governments began about March 10 and continued for approximately 2 weeks. Telegrams describing these consultations and containing the proposed revisions are in Department of State, Central File 651G.51H.

that an interim acknowledgement of the letter was made on February 26, 1959 (Tab C).[4] The suggested substantive written reply conforms in most respects to the tentative working draft (Tab D) which the White House approved for transmission on March 9, 1959 to our Embassies in Cambodia, Thailand and Viet-Nam for their information and guidance.[5]

The final suggested text of the written reply (Tab A) incorporates changes suggested by the Embassies. Those sections, referring specifically to our consultations with the Thai and Vietnamese Governments (last sentence of the second paragraph, all of the third and fourth paragraphs, and the first sentence of the fifth paragraph) have the oral approval of responsible officials in those Governments.

I believe the suggested text constitutes a positive response to Prince Sihanouk's appeal to the President since it demonstrates that we have discussed the problem of regional relations in Southeast Asia with the Thai and Vietnamese and it incorporates reassuring and conciliatory statements by the two neighboring governments. At the same time, it avoids implying that we accept Sihanouk's charges against the Thai and Vietnamese at face value and should not carry the implication that we are prepared to exert pressure on our friends in Thailand and Viet-Nam.

The fact that our new Ambassador to Cambodia, the Honorable William G. Trimble, is scheduled to take up his duties at Phnom Penh the early part of April suggests the possibility of supplementing the substantive written reply to Prince Sihanouk with a personal oral message from the President. This would constitute an opportunity to emphasize and supplement the major points in the written reply. In drafting the latter, account has been taken of Prince Sihanouk's penchant for "open diplomacy" and of the probability that he will wish to make the correspondence public. An oral message, however, could be of a more private nature, less exploitable by the Prince in public. Accordingly, a suggested oral message from the President to Prince Sihanouk also is attached at Tab A.

Since Prince Sihanouk's tentatively planned visit to France may delay delivery of the message by Ambassador Trimble, some revision of the message may later be necessary.

Recommendation:

That you sign the attached Memorandum for the President.

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[4] See Document 102.

[5] Text transmitted in telegram 2027 to Bangkok, also sent to Saigon as telegram 1454, March 9. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/3–659)

Tab A

Memorandum From the Acting Secretary of State to the President[6]

Washington, March 27, 1959.

SUBJECT

Substantive Reply to Prince Sihanouk's Letter

You will recall that Prince Sihanouk addressed a letter to you on February 23, 1959 and that you acknowledged it on February 26, stating that it was being given earnest attention. Since the letter involved not only United States relations with Cambodia, but also our relations with Thailand and Viet-Nam, I considered it necessary to consult the Thai and Vietnamese Governments on some aspects of the proposed substantive reply. Accordingly, certain portions of a tentative text of the reply were discussed with these two Governments. These discussions with the Thai and Vietnamese, and the desire of those two Governments in turn to consult each other on the matter, account for the delay in preparing the final text of the proposed reply. It was not until Thursday afternoon, March 26, that final concurrence was received from the Vietnamese Government on the pertinent section of the answer to Prince Sihanouk's letter. The suggested text of the substantive reply, incorporating views of the Thai and Vietnamese Governments, is enclosed.

I recommend that you approve the reply, in which case the text will be transmitted immediately by telegraph to our Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at Phnom Penh for delivery to Prince Sihanouk.[7] The Prince plans to depart for France next Monday, March 30. I believe that delivery of your reply prior to his departure may well move him to halt the rising tide of suspicion and near-hostility toward Americans in Cambodia which, if unabated, may affect adversely the US position in that country. An amelioration would be less likely if the letter were delivered to the Prince after his departure.

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[6] No classification marking.

[7] A note on the source text indicates that, according to Goodpaster, the reply and oral statement were approved by the White House on March 28. The letter was sent to Phnom Penh for delivery to Sihanouk in telegram 844, March 28. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/3–2359) According to telegram 1276 from Phnom Penh, March 29, Chargé Kellogg delivered the letter to Foreign Minister Son Sann who planned to give it to Sihanouk upon his return to Phnom Penh that night. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/3–2959) Kellogg reported in telegram 1290 from Phnom Penh, April 2, that both Sihanouk and Son Sann were disappointed with Eisenhower's letter. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/4–259; included in the microfiche supplement)

You will note in the text a reference to the prospective forwarding of additional thoughts on Prince Sihanouk's letter through our new Ambassador to Cambodia, the Honorable William C. Trimble, who is expected to take up his duties there early in April. Accordingly, I recommend that you also approve the enclosed suggested text of an oral statement for the Ambassador to make in your name to Prince Sihanouk which, I believe, would usefully supplement the written reply.

I recommend that no publicity be given either to the written reply or to the oral message. However, I suggest you authorize the Department to inform the Governments of Thailand and Viet-Nam orally of the substance of the written reply.

Christian A. Herter[8]

Enclosure

SUGGESTED SUBSTANTIVE REPLY TO PRINCE SIHANOUK'S LETTER OF FEBRUARY 23, 1959[9]

DEAR PRINCE SIHANOUK: I have given most serious thought to your letter of February 23, 1959, which I acknowledged on Febraury 26. Your expression of friendly regard and confidence recalled to my mind the mutual understanding we affirmed on the occasion of your visit to my country last year. Therefore, I have received your letter in this spirit of amity and frankness, and wish to respond to it in the same vein.

I gather from your letter that the difficulties you describe stem essentially from misunderstandings in the relationships between your country and some of its neighbors. The resolution of such underlying problems depends primarily, I believe, on the actions and attitudes of the countries directly concerned. Nevertheless, the existence of amicable relations among all free nations, and particularly among those with which the United States shares close bonds of friendship, is of vital interest to me. Therefore, I was glad to request the Department of State to consult the Governments of Thailand and of the Republic of Viet-Nam in the context of our friendly relations with these countries.

In the course of these consultations, the Government of Thailand affirmed its respect for the sovereignty and integrity of the Royal Cambodian Government. It expressed the opinion that internal disorder and instability in Cambodia would be harmful to the interests of the Free World and serve only the designs of international communism whose expanding activities in the area are of grave concern to

[8] Printed from a copy that bears this stamped signature.
[9] No classification marking.

Thailand. Furthermore, it indicated its willingness to cooperate with the Royal Cambodian Government in strengthening friendly relations on the basis of mutual respect and consistent good will. Finally, the Government of Thailand as a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization reaffirmed its respect for the sovereign right of the Royal Cambodian Government as well as that of any other government to decide whether or not it wishes to adhere to Free World collective security arrangements.

In discussions with the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, that Government expressed its disapproval of any actions against the independence and liberty of Cambodia. It reaffirmed its desire to maintain friendly relations on a reciprocal basis with the Royal Cambodian Government as well as other Free World countries. The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam also proposed in these discussions specific means of jointly controlling illegal activities in the Cambodian-Vietnamese frontier zone. The Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam expressed the conviction that agreement with the Royal Cambodian Government on such proposals would promote the maintenance of the best relations.

I trust that these views of the Governments of Thailand and of the Republic of Viet-Nam, if combined with an attitude of conciliation and good will on the part of the Royal Cambodian Government, will provide the bases for an improvement in mutual understanding and confidence between your country and its neighbors, which in turn will permit the three nations to develop sound, direct relations through normal diplomatic channels. I have discussed the substance of your letter with The Honorable William C. Trimble, whom His Majesty The King has agreed to accept as our new Ambassador at Phnom Penh, and expect to forward through him additional thoughts on this subject.

My impression that the difficulties you describe stem essentially from the interrelationships between your country and its neighbors, does not ignore certain obligations which the United States incurs in the extension of American military assistance. You correctly perceive that the purpose of this assistance is to help free nations defend their independence. Just as we sought in Cambodia to insure certain safeguards on the use of this aid, we have sought and will continue to seek to insure that other governments use our assistance only for the purposes intended. The United States attaches the utmost importance to these international obligations.

Your proposal for supervised elections in Cambodia appears to involve a purely internal Cambodian matter on which I believe I cannot appropriately comment. At the same time, the United States Government has no reservation whatsoever in reaffirming its continued recognition of your full attributes and prerogatives as the President of the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

I was distressed to hear of the illness of His Majesty King Norodom Suramarit and I take this opportunity to express my personal best wishes for your father's rapid and complete recovery.

With warm regard.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

SUGGESTED STATEMENT FROM THE PRESIDENT TO PRINCE SIHANOUK TO BE DELIVERED ORALLY BY AMBASSADOR TRIMBLE [10]

1. The President of the United States wishes to reiterate his appreciation for the letter addressed to him by His Royal Highness, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, on February 23, 1959. The President was moved by the concern His Royal Highness expressed therein over the conditions obtaining in Cambodia at that time.

2. Although His Royal Highness did not specifically state that United States aid equipment furnished to neighboring countries had been used for improper purposes in Cambodia, and United States authorities are not aware of any such improper use, the President was disturbed over the context in which American aid was mentioned in the letter. His Royal Highness may be assured that the United States does not condone any use of American aid equipment for purposes other than internal security and national defense, as provided in the aid agreements. Furthermore, the United States would view with the utmost concern any evidence that aid equipment was deliberately diverted to improper use.

3. However, the terms of the letter suggest that the concern expressed by His Royal Highness is related primarily to the relations between Cambodia and its neighbors. His Royal Highness correctly perceives the inability of the United States to interfere in the exercise of sovereign rights by other independent nations. To be sure, the extension of American aid to another country entails certain responsibilities on the part of the United States with respect to the use of such aid, but does not give the United States the right to determine the

[10] No classification marking. This statement was never made to Sihanouk because of his departure for medical treatment in France. In telegram 1536 from Phnom Penh, May 29, Trimble noted that he and others made the major points of the statement in discussions with Son Sann, who undoubtedly passed them on to Sihanouk. Trimble recommended not making the statement when Sihanouk returned from France in early June. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/5–2959) The Department agreed. (Telegram 1025 to Phnom Penh, May 29; *ibid.*)

domestic or foreign policies of that nation. His Royal Highness will recall that assurances to this effect have repeatedly been given in connection with the American aid program in Cambodia.

4. The President, therefore, believes that the primary responsibility for a resolution of the problems described by His Royal Highness rests upon the statesmen of the countries directly concerned, rather than upon the United States.

5. Nevertheless, the President is personally concerned over the evidences of misunderstanding among countries which we count as friends of the United States. Therefore, in addition to the steps mentioned in his substantive written reply to His Royal Highness, the President has asked the Honorable J. Graham Parsons, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, to give his attention to this matter in the course of his forthcoming visit to the various countries concerned.

6. The President confidently counts on the good will and statesmanship of the national leaders of Cambodia, Thailand and Viet-Nam as the major determining factors in any improvement of the situation. Therefore, he expects Mr. Parsons' brief discussions with the leaders of these countries to be directed primarily toward encouraging the development of greater confidence and trust in the relations among the three nations.

7. The President would be gravely disappointed should his intentions in this regard be misinterpreted. In particular, he trusts it will be clearly understood that actions taken in this instance by the United States to help Cambodia and its neighbors improve friendly relations do not constitute an assumption of responsibility on the part of the United States for these relations or for the actions of any of the three countries concerned.

8. The President wishes again to express his interest in the independence and welfare of Cambodia and to reaffirm his personal regard for His Royal Highness.

109. Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State[1]

Baguio, April 16, 1959—7 p.m.

24. From Parsons. As indicated Phnom Penh 1341[2] fact that we failed to inform Cambodia of plotting continues to be major cause current attitude suspicion, distrust re U.S. RKG not only convinced we had this knowledge but also apparently believes our info more extensive than was actually case. Denials that we had been aware plotting would only serve increase distrust, while argumentation that our knowledge fragmentary and we not accustomed to spreading mere rumors is not very convincing.

With view eliminating or at least minimizing effect this particular cause distrust I suggest that on subject plots Dept authorize me to speak along following lines to Son Sann when I visit Phnom Penh or preferably to Prince if he there at time.

(a) Rumors of plotting against regime came to our attention some months ago. Info was of hearsay nature and incomplete. Rather than report this gossip to RKG we considered it preferable to raise matter informally and confidentially with RTG and VNG with view dissuading them from any thought of giving support to any dissident elements. We made strong and repeated representations to both and in doing so we considered we acting as friend Cambodia and in interest improving relations among three countries concerned.[3]

(b) As senior official RKG, Dap Chhuon naturally known to U.S. representatives Cambodia. However when reports reached us that he planning to oppose regime our only contact with him was to to urge he desist such action.

Durbrow, Johnson and Trimble concur in foregoing which should of course also be weighed carefully in light of Phnom Penh and Washington conversations with Cambodians.

Bohlen

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/4–1559. Secret. Also sent to Saigon, Bangkok, and Phnom Penh. Parsons was attending the Far East Chiefs of Mission Conference in Baguio, April 16–17. He took a subsequent tour of the Far East which included a stay in Cambodia on April 28.

[2] In telegram 1341, April 12, the new Ambassador to Cambodia, William C. Trimble, reported that he had presented his credentials to Son Sann and tried to dispel rumors of U.S. involvement in coups against Sihanouk. Son Sann remained skeptical and asked why the United States did not inform Cambodia of the coups. Trimble responded it was not U.S. policy to circulate rumors. Son Sann insinuated that three Americans met in Bangkok with Cambodian coup plotters, a charge that Trimble denied. (*Ibid.*, 123-Trimble, William C.)

[3] In telegram 701 to Rangoon for Parsons, repeated to Phnom Penh as telegram 910 and to Saigon as telegram 1690, April 22, the Department suggested that Parsons not mention U.S. efforts in Bangkok and Saigon to discourage coups against Sihanouk. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/4–1659)

110. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, April 24, 1959—12:57 p.m.

916. Department's 2231 to Bangkok, repeated Saigon 1615, Phnom Penh 862.[2]

1. Cambodian Ambassador April 22 gave Robertson Sihanouk's reply dated Paris April 13[3] to President's letter March 28. Following is summary substantive portion reply:

a) Notes improvement domestic situation with death Dap Chhuon but states "Khmer rebels who have taken refuge in neighboring countries and who may at any time attack our people thanks to the support they have received and the weapons distributed to them, claim openly—but wrongly, I am sure—that your great country is backing them in their struggle against our monarchy and our government. Perhaps, Mr. President, in your great wisdom you will find the means of making such a claim impossible or more difficult".

b) Reiterates desire reach mutually profitable understanding with Thailand and Viet-Nam and expresses appreciation for US consultations with TG and GVN on this subject. Refers to détente with Thailand, but states relations with Viet-Nam still far from satisfactory.

c) Discusses GVN's proposal for combined operations on border control, mentioning RKG's refusal owing to neutrality, but affirms willingness take action against Vietnamese rebels and pirates crossing border into Cambodia and readiness receive GVN information on movements rebel bands to facilitate efficient operations. Hopes in return that open support of certain Vietnamese elements for Cambodian rebels will stop.

d) Notes President's assurance re importance placed on proper use of US military aid and trusts neighbors will observe their obligations on this score.

e) Comments at length on election proposal noting it evoked by Thai and Vietnamese claims Sihanouk's policy contrary to popular will.

f) In closing notes US can do much to conciliate allies and friends to end troubled situation which benefits only communism.

2. Tone of letter generally cordial and respectful. Recommendations for acknowledgement now being formulated. Complete text follows by air pouch to all addressees except Vientiane.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/4–2459. Confidential; Presidential Handling. Drafted by Askew, cleared with SEA and in draft at the White House by John Eisenhower, and approved by Robertson. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, and Vientiane for Parsons.

[2] In this telegram, April 6, the Department informed the Embassy in Bangkok of Sihanouk's disappointment with Eisenhower's letter. (*Ibid.*, 751G.00/4–659)

[3] The translation of the original French letter is in Eisenhower Library, Project Clean Up, Cambodia DDE. A copy is also attached to a memorandum from Robertson to Herter, May 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/5–459)

3. Request Bangkok, Phnom Penh and Saigon comments soonest on sub para 1 a) above re rebels' claim of US support.[4]

Observe Presidential Handling.

Herter

[4] The Embassy in Saigon reported that it had no knowledge of claims by Khmer rebels of U.S. support, and the Embassy in Bangkok stated that no elements of the mission had any contact with Cambodian dissidents in Thailand. (Telegrams 2258 from Saigon and 2669 from Bangkok, both April 25; both *ibid.*, 751H.00/4–2259) The Embassy in Phnom Penh's response is in telegram 1435, May 5. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/5–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

111. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, April 27, 1959—2 p.m.

2268. From Parsons. Reference Department telegram 1690 to Saigon.[2]

1. My visit to Phnom Penh was conceived of as reason for revelation at this late date of representations made. Cambodians are on notice that visit is something in nature of special mission to deal with very subject coup plotting and Son Sann may well expect my talk with him have something new of substance. Conversely, if I have nothing but old line in new words it may smack of pleading to accept truth of statements which Cambodians seem not to have accepted fully.

2. It had been my thought representations would be characterized as preventative in nature and made because we knew of travel and presence in Thailand and Vietnam of dissident elements and because we, of course, assumed they would seek to stir up situation and obtain help where they could. I regret if Baguio 24[3] indicated I would admit complicity of governments. That was certainly not my intention. Furthermore, I planned to link revelation of these representations with statements to Son Sann on effect intemperate Cambodian actions and statements had on neighbors who genuinely concerned by Communist

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/4–2759. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated niact to Phnom Penh and Bangkok.

[2] See footnote 3, Document 109.

[3] Document 109.

menace. In discussing matter at Baguio we recognized danger publicity at some time and Ambassadors Durbrow and Johnson indicated they were willing accept risk.

3. What Cambodians do, in all probability, know is that we were at least aware of the plotting that was going on. Their evidence on that score is probably still mounting. What Cambodians don't know is that when we came to know about plots, we did in fact make efforts with TG and GVN to have such plots discouraged. Fact that we have never explicitly told Cambodia about our efforts may, therefore, serve to abet their suspicions as to our complicity.

4. I fully appreciate definite drawbacks to reviving and reviewing sorry events of past which are best forgotten. However, the Cambodians have so far been in no mood to forget them and they are likely to be raised by Cambodians in my conversations with them. If question is raised by Cambodians, I still believe some discreetly worded revelations in context mentioned paragraph 2 above would help compose situation.

5. Unless further instructed,[4] I will be guided by briefing paper prepared before I left Washington, plus such other telegrams to Phnom Penh which may have been received during my travels.

6. Durbrow concurs.

Durbrow

[4] In telegram 927 to Phnom Penh, April 27, the Department reiterated that even the most discreet mention of U.S. "preventative representations" in Thailand and Saigon would be a mistake. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/4–2759; included in the microfiche supplement)

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112. Telegram From the Embassy in Korea to the Department of State[1]

Seoul, May 5, 1959—8 p.m.

588. From Parsons. Although I have not had opportunity to study record of talks I had in Saigon with Diem, Vice Pres. Tho, Chuan and Mau or those in Cambodia with Son Sann following preliminary observations may be of interest.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H3/5–559. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, Bangkok, and Vientiane.

1. Concern of Vietnamese, Diem especially, with worsening internal security problem especially in southwest is evident and they genuinely believe Cambodian border area is both a refuge and a breeding ground for their Communist enemies. They further believe Cambodians are indifferent or worse in regard to this situation and they cite (rather unconvincingly) latter's refusal of trans-border pursuit proposal as proof no purpose would be served by further proposals or negotiations. Their contempt for Sihanouk and Cambodians is undisguised and this obviously compounds difficulty. Diem's attitude seems to stem from his Mandarin authoritarian background and his present remedies for his problem are simple. 1) Elimination of Communists wherever they may be, almost exclusively by military means. 2) No truck with present leadership of Cambodia. In fact I fear there persists a restless desire to get rid of Sihanouk, and Cambodians, fortified by ample evidence of maladroit GVN efforts to this end, are deeply suspicious of GVN and of us as friends GVN. Atmosphere on both sides is thus thoroughly poisoned and no Vietnamese whom I saw showed any responsiveness to Durbrow's and my reiterated suggestions that they continue seek basis for negotiation. Is symptomatic of atmosphere that Diem sent Ladejinsky to intercept me at Saigon Airport April 30 when I was enroute Phnom Penh–Hong Kong to bear down once again on Cambodian perfidy theme as he was fearful he had not expressed himself with sufficient force during our three-hour talk on 27th. (His fear on that score was quite unfounded.)

2. Son Sann is just as emotional as Sihanouk on subject Vietnamese and documents his case exhaustively and impressively. At same time he is in my view anti-Communist and has lively appreciation Communist danger to Cambodia. At one time he said he had under consideration denouncing Vietnamese for failure cope with their internal Communist problem which risked endangering Cambodia. As financial man he is also preoccupied by failure implement Paris Accords which he ascribes, mistakenly to be sure, 100 percent to Vietnamese duplicity and antagonism. Frankly atmosphere is more thoroughly poisoned with emotion and suspicion than I had comprehended and attitudes on each side seem about as hostile and ingrained as those of Rhee toward Japanese. With U.S. regarded as closest friend of Vietnamese and with existing suspicions which I was unable to allay with well worn denials and arguments, it is remarkable that Cambodians were as anxious as they seemed to inaugurate with my visit new phase in our relations. I can only ascribe it to recognition of U.S. importance to them and to their realization that it would be suicidal to invite ChiComs in militarily. (Yet this is just what Son Sann said he and colleagues had told Sihanouk they would do to avenge him if Vietnamese assassinated him in course their alleged continued anti-Cambodian plotting.)

3. Apart from psychopathic attitude of each country toward other, U.S. objectives are being frustrated, I believe by a second factor of some importance in Cambodia, namely attitude and influence of French Ambassador Gorce and his number two. Neither of these officials are career diplomats but rather relics of colonial past and I heard no good of either as regards their narrow and self-serving attitudes.

4. In these circumstances I see little prospect of immediate or overall settlement between two countries. Fortunately U.S. influence and leverage is greater in Vietnam where in my view the next constructive steps must be attempted. It is proven fact that Vietnam has sought to overthrow legitimate government of its neighbor and has thereby jeopardized free world position in SEA. I think prompt consideration should therefore be given to following U.S. courses of action:

a) Warning to Diem and if need be thereafter sanctions in form of reduced aid unless Vietnam ceases interference in internal affairs of neighbor. This means added risks as aid cut would almost certainly have to be on defense side if it is to be meaningful to Diem.

b) Pressure on Quai d'Orsay to cure French representation in Phnom Penh. Lalouette in Saigon shows signs awareness short sightedness French attitudes as expressed in Phnom Penh. The French have considerable influence in Cambodia, notably with Sihanouk, and we must enlist this support in counteracting what otherwise could be a disastrous turn of events for Cambodia, France and the U.S.

c) If and as required at later stage, should both so desire, I think we should take new and hard look before declining to extend our good offices informally. We are inextricably involved already and if we later come to have greater influence in Cambodia (we have little now), it may be necessary to use it, particularly with respect to problems in southwest border area where Cambodian cooperation must be had.

5. In closing it is worth noting that emotions in Cambodia against U.S. have probably cooled since worst period in March. Sihanouk's absence naturally takes mercury out of atmosphere but further than this rather excessive courtesies extended me were taken by many in Phnom Penh as indicating desire to let bygones be bygones. Perhaps concern was felt over how far U.S.-Cambodian relations had deteriorated in recent months. Presence new Ambassador also presents opportunity promote better spirit on both sides. Only other encouraging note I could detect was fact Son Sann apparently was shaken somewhat by my comments on Cambodian press and other mass media being neutral but pro-Communist and on consequences this would progressively have orientation people and future of monarchy if not corrected. He made no rejoinder when I described how press failed to

follow neutrality policy of Prince Sihanouk but later mentioned matter to Ambassador Trimble.[2]

Would appreciate Saigon and Phnom Penh comments to Washington.[3]

Dowling

[2] A synopsis of intelligence material for May 8–9, prepared for the President by John S.D. Eisenhower, included the following information on Cambodia and Parsons' trip:

"Growing Sino-Soviet bloc influence in Cambodia is being abetted by the pronounced leftist influence in the Information Ministry. During his recent visit to Cambodia, Ambassador Parsons expressed his concern to top Cambodian officials that the leftist trend in the press and other information media was gradually conditioning the people to accept Communist ideology." (Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries)

[3] In telegram 2371 from Saigon, May 10, the Embassy agreed with the recommendations above, but warned that because of psychological factors they would not be easy to carry out. The Embassy gave an account of a meeting with Diem to prove this point. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/5–1059; included in the microfiche supplement)

113. Letter From President Eisenhower to Prime Minister Sihanouk[1]

Washington, May 7, 1959.

DEAR PRINCE SIHANOUK: I appreciate very much the friendly sentiments which you expressed in your letter of April 13, 1959, from Paris and I read with interest your further explanation of several points raised in your earlier letter of February twenty-third.

With respect to your observation that Cambodian rebels are openly claiming United States support, I wish to assure you most emphatically that the Government of the United States is in no way supporting any efforts to overthrow the Monarchy or the duly constituted Government of Cambodia. Any claims to the contrary, whatever the source, are without the slightest foundation. I shall request the

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/5–859. Confidential; Presidential Handling. Transmitted in telegram 969 to Phnom Penh, May 8, which indicated that the letter was delivered to Nong Kimny for forwarding to Prince Sihanouk in Paris. Telegram 969, which is the source text, was drafted by Askew and cleared by John Eisenhower in the White House, Kocher, Jenkins, and Herter.

The text of this letter, drafted by Askew, was approved by President Eisenhower on May 7. (Memorandum from Herter to Eisenhower, May 6; *ibid.*, 751H.00/5–559) Telegram 969 also notes that a paraphrase of the letter was sent to Bangkok and Saigon.

United States Ambassador at Phnom Penh to discuss with the appropriate officials of your Government the nature of such claims and the means to counter them should this be deemed necessary.

Your comments on the marked improvement in relations between Cambodia and Thailand are most reassuring. I trust that the reiteration by you and President Diem of the desire for friendly relations foreshadows a similar, mutually profitable understanding between Cambodia and Viet-Nam. You may be sure that the United States will follow the development of amicable relations among the countries of Southeast Asia with active and sympathetic interest. In particular, I hope that it may soon be possible for positive steps to be taken toward the resolution of the outstanding differences between your country and its neighbors. American Ambassadors in the area stand ready to encourage the development of mutual confidence, and, wherever possible, to lend friendly assistance to specific endeavors toward this end.

I have taken serious note of the comment toward the end of your letter indicating your desire to enlist the interest of the United States in the future of a small country such as Cambodia, and I wish to reassure you on this score. As a matter of principle, the disparity in size and material resources of our two countries in no way affects the genuine concern of the United States in Cambodia's welfare. It is also part of American tradition that we feel a keen sympathy and understanding for the aspirations of other countries, whether large or small, to achieve and maintain their freedom. Finally, as a matter of purely personal association, I recall that my inauguration as President occurred in the same year that Cambodia, largely through your efforts, finally gained the full measure of national independence.

I believe you will agree that active American interest in Cambodia has been demonstrated not only in words but also in tangible assistance intended to help your country maintain its independence and further develop its material resources. This assistance has been provided in complete conformity with the respect of the United States for Cambodia's sovereignty, which includes respect for Cambodia's sovereign right to choose its own means of protecting Cambodian independence and contributing to the common goal of world peace. As long as Cambodia subscribes to these aims, you may confidently rely on American friendship and understanding.

Since last communicating with you I have heard of your operation in Paris. I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your speedy and complete recovery.

With warm regard,
Sincerely,

Dwight D. Eisenhower[2]

[2] Telegram 969 bears this typed signature.

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114. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, May 9, 1959.

SUBJECT

Vietnamese/Cambodian Relations

Mr. Parsons has emphasized in his preliminary observations[2] on the Cambodian-Vietnamese problem three obstacles of basic importance:

1) President Diem's persistent contempt for Sihanouk and refusal to consider doing business with him;
2) The emotional and antagonistic reaction on the part of the Cambodians toward Viet-Nam;
3) The narrow and self-serving attitudes of French representatives in Phnom Penh.

In light of the above, Mr. Parsons has recommended consideration of three possible courses of action:

1) A warning to Diem and, if need be thereafter, sanctions in the form of reduced aid to terminate Vietnamese interference in Cambodian affairs.
2) Pressure on the French Foreign Office to cure its representation in Phnom Penh and use its influence in Cambodia in Free World interests.
3) Extension of U.S. good offices to settlement of Vietnamese/Cambodian disputes under certain circumstances.

SEA comments on the courses of action set forth by Mr. Parsons are given below, as requested, for possible use in your discussions with Mr. Parsons. We have also suggested an additional course of action dealing with the border control problem.

[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, Vietnam. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Askew and Mendenhall, cleared by Jenkins, and sent through Parsons.
[2] See Document 112.

Begin Limit Distribution

A. Prevention of Continued GVN Interference in Cambodian Affairs

Mr. Parsons has suggested that we warn Diem against continued interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia, and if necessary thereafter, impose sanctions in the form of reduced aid in an effort to compel cessation of Vietnamese interference.

We agree with Mr. Parsons' fear that Diem and Nhu still desire to get rid of Sihanouk, since they believe that his policies in Cambodia present a continuing grave threat to the security of Viet-Nam. Since, however, there is no apparent alternative to Sihanouk on the Cambodian scene and Son Sann has indicated to Mr. Parsons that he and his colleagues would not hesitate to invite the Chinese Communists into Cambodia militarily to avenge an assassination of Sihanouk, we believe that fundamental U.S. as well as Vietnamese interests in the area require an acceptance of Sihanouk's continued possession of political authority in Cambodia, discontinuation of maneuvers against him, and efforts by the GVN to work with him.

We believe that these factors warrant a U.S. approach to Diem to try to induce him to see this situation as we do. Insofar as such an approach is concerned with trying to stop Vietnamese interference in Cambodian affairs, it must be based on the evidence that we have. There is no evidence since the Dap Chhuon fiasco that the GVN is actively promoting a coup against Sihanouk. There is evidence, however, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that the GVN is actively continuing to print and distribute for use in Southeast Asia anti-Sihanouk propaganda. We, therefore, believe that this is what we would be justified in asking the GVN to terminate.

As for sanctions against the GVN in case it continues anti-Sihanouk maneuvers in one form or another after such an approach, we believe that threatened or actual reduction in aid for this purpose is inadvisable for the following reasons:

1) Threats to reduce aid as a means of political pressure have been rarely executed in fact, because consideration of all the factors involved has usually led to the conclusion that over-riding U.S. interests would be defeated if the threats were carried out. We believe, in view of Viet-Nam's closely allied relationship with the U.S. and the vital importance to U.S. interests of maintaining it as a strong anti-Communist bastion in Southeast Asia, we would be forced to conclude that we could not reduce aid to Viet-Nam for purposes of political pressure.

2) We doubt that Diem could ever come to understand how the U.S. could threaten or reduce aid to Viet-Nam (or a close ally) in an effort to compel it to take a definite course of action toward neutralist Cambodia when the U.S., after deliberate consideration, decided against threatening or reducing aid to Cambodia following its recogni-

tion of Communist China—an act not only contrary to the most fundamental U.S. policy in the Far East but the one which has led Viet-Nam to engage in maneuvers against Sihanouk.

3) It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find the place in our aid program to Viet-Nam at which a cut should be made for reasons of political pressure. Embassy Saigon has already told the GVN that the U.S. wishes to reduce its contribution to Viet-Nam's military budget by $14 million in FY 1960, and Mr. Dillon, apparently on the basis of this and perhaps unaware that Embassy Saigon had hoped to divert an equivalent amount to an increase in the economic sector of our aid program, has informed Mr. Saccio in ICA by a memorandum that Viet-Nam's Defense Support program for FY 1960 can be cut $10–$15 million. Moreover, it is likely that we shall have to absorb in the Vietnamese program part of a Congressional appropriations cut which would mean a level of aid to Viet-Nam below what we in SEA think necessary to achieve our policy objectives there. As there is very little room left for financing economic projects out of the counterpart pipeline, any cut in Fiscal Year 1960 will be likely to reduce the size of the economic program and, if serious, could even jeopardize the road projects, which constitute the biggest component of the economic sector of our aid program. Needless to say, such cuts would throw South Viet-Nam further behind the Communist regime in North Viet-Nam in the economic development race between the two zones, and would postpone progress toward greater self-support by Viet-Nam. Under these circumstances any further cut for political pressure purposes would seem out of the question.

However, we believe a different kind of sanctions might be possible if Diem fails to heed our warning about interference in Cambodian affairs. On proof of continued GVN maneuvering, we could tell him that we propose to go to Sihanouk and say 1) that we have no connection with such maneuvers; 2) we do not approve of them; and 3) we have strongly urged the GVN to discontinue them. We believe that such action or threat thereof by the U.S. might stand some chance of bringing Vietnamese maneuvers to an end. *End Limit Distribution.*

B. Pressure on Paris to Cure French Representation in Phnom Penh

Expressions of U.S. dissatisfaction over the actions of French Ambassador Gorce at Phnom Penh already have been made to the French several times and at high levels:

1) Mr. Parsons pointedly mentioned to M. Daridan on February 4 that it would be in the interest of all three powers if Ambassador Gorce were to dispel Cambodian illusions that the U.S. was plotting to overthrow Sihanouk.

2) Mr. Robertson also raised the subject with M. Daridan, on February 6, stating that Gorce appeared not to be convinced of U.S. non-involvement in Cambodian coup plotting and stressing the need for the Western powers to work in the same direction in Southeast Asia.

3) Governor Herter, while Acting Secretary, detailed our complaints over Gorce's action to French Ambassador Alphand on March 4.[3]

4) Finally, Under Secretary Dillon told M. Joxe, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, on April 22[4] that Gorce could do considerably more than he had to date in disposing Sihanouk more favorably to the Free World and lessen suspicions of U.S. motivations in particular.

In not a single instance did the French attempt to defend Gorce and there have been some indirect indications of French dissatisfaction with him. However, Gorce has recently been in France (concurrently with Sihanouk's visit), and we have heard no reports of his dismissal from the Phnom Penh post or of any change in his tactics.

An additional approach to the French in Paris may, nevertheless, be worthwhile. It is suggested that the approach be made to Couve or Joxe along the following lines, citing Department instructions:

1) Review the setback to the Free World position in Cambodia arising from the recent coup plots.

2) Reiterate U.S. non-involvement and refer to the efforts exerted by the U.S. to prevent a deterioration in Cambodia's relations with Thailand and Viet-Nam, which served only to enhance the position of the Communists in Cambodia.

3) Note that Gorce on repeated occasions undertook unilaterally actions which had the effect of seriously undermining Cambodian confidence in the U.S. and of further weakening Sihanouk's orientation toward the Free World.

4) Recall that U.S. concern over these actions by Gorce have been expressed to the French repeatedly and at a high level.

5) Emphasize that by reason of the favorable position enjoyed by France in Cambodia, French representatives there are in a particularly advantageous position to exert influence on Sihanouk.

6) Express U.S. concern over continued tension in the area, particularly between Cambodia and Viet-Nam, and explain that the U.S. regards an improvement in these relations to be of critical importance to prevent a further leftward drift in Cambodia, where Communist subversive potential and influence already has reached an alarming stage. An essential element in any move toward such an improvement is a more rational attitude on the part of Sihanouk toward the effects of his policies and actions on Cambodia's Free World neighbors. While exercising extreme care and discretion in his relations with the Communists, Sihanouk does not hesitate to abuse his neighbors (and the U.S.). The strength of the Free World and assistance from the Free World are assets to Cambodia that cannot be eroded with impunity if Sihanouk honestly wishes to pursue a genuine neutral policy.

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[3] The meeting was on March 3, not 4; see Document 105.

[4] Reported in a memorandum of conversation, April 22. (Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199)

7) Urge the French Government to see that the extensive French influence in Cambodia is exercised so as to strengthen Sihanouk's orientation toward the Free World, to alert him to the threat of the tightening Communist embrace, and to encourage him toward more rational relations with Cambodia's Free World neighbors.

8) Suggest that toward this end particular attention be given to selection and guidance of French representatives in Cambodia.

C. U.S. Good Offices

Mr. Parsons suggests in effect that we be prepared to extend U.S. good offices in Cambodian-Vietnamese disputes under cautiously circumscribed conditions. It is believed that the exercise of U.S. influence in the area definitely is desirable whenever such action holds the promise of improving—or preventing a further deterioration in—relations between the two countries. Such action would appear to be in consonance with existing over-all policy of exerting our best efforts to promote friendly relations in the area short of involvement carrying the risk of further damage to the U.S. position. As Mr. Parsons points out, U.S. interests are perforce inextricably involved in Cambodian-Vietnamese relations. Recognizing the harm to these interests inherent in the Cambodian and Vietnamese reactions to their problems, we already have sought on several occasions to apply a moderating influence, particularly in connection with the recent coup plotting against Sihanouk. We are now considering further measures in this direction (A and B above). The desirability of U.S. involvement in specific issues in dispute, such as border incidents, should be judged on an ad hoc basis, taking into account the circumstances of each particular case and considering in particular whether such action holds a reasonable promise of reducing tensions or whether it would merely serve to incur resentment against the U.S. The basic antipathies on which Mr. Parsons remarked must lead us to consider very carefully, before extending our good offices, whether or not the two parties genuinely want to arrive at a settlement of the point at issue. At the same time, we should be on the alert for possibilities of assisting the two countries in reducing such specific problems (as for example border control, mentioned below) when it promises to remove a bone of contention and thereby contribute to a lessening of basic antagonisms.

D. Border Control Arrangements

While Mr. Parsons' comment that the GVN has shown no responsiveness to reiterated suggestions from him and Ambassador Durbrow that it continue to seek a basis for negotiations with the RKG is discouraging, we believe our efforts in this direction should be maintained. The question of border control arrangements would seem to offer the best possibility at this time for some progress. It is *the* problem in Cambodian-Vietnamese relations of most interest to the GVN.

Moreover, the reported RKG note to the GVN suggesting that the GVN supply information to the RKG whenever a dissident band is expected to cross into Cambodia indicates a more cooperative attitude by the RKG on this subject than in the past.

We believe we should try to convince the GVN that gradualism would be the best approach with the RKG on this problem. In view of the RKG rejection of the GVN's hot-pursuit proposal and its sensitivity to any arrangement which smacks to it of a military alliance, it would seem best for the GVN to take the olive branch offered by the RKG and to start with the simple measure of establishing a system of exchange of information on dissident activities between the two governments. It may be that a cooperative arrangement would never mature beyond this step, but that could be seen after this first step was given a chance to operate.

Ambassador Trimble has suggested it may be preferable for arrangements re such exchange of information to be worked out at the military rather than the civilian level in order to avoid sabotage by Communist sympathizers in Cambodia and to take advantage of reasonably friendly relations between the GVN and RKG military staffs. This might depend upon feasibility on the Vietnamese side since the army had until recently been largely withdrawn from internal security duties. During the last few weeks, however, the army appears again to be assuming a more active role in this field, presumably because of the GVN's concern with the deterioration in the situation.

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115. Memorandum of a Conversation Between Secretary of State Herter and Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, Palais des Nations, Geneva, May 10, 1959, 11:15 a.m.[1]

US/MC/17

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[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by Reinhardt on May 14 and approved by Herter. The source text indicates the meeting took place in Secretary Herter's office. He was in Geneva for the Foreign Ministers Conference which began on May 11. Robertson prepared for Herter an extensive briefing memorandum, May 7, entitled "Alleged U.S. Involvement in Cambodian Coup Plots," for use in the meeting with Hammarskjöld. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.00/5–759; included in the microfiche supplement)

SUBJECT

American Activities in Southeast Asia

The Secretary said he understood Mr. Hammarskjold had some views on the subjct of the "Quiet American" in Southeast Asia. Mr. Hammarskjold replied that his Lebanese experience had somewhat colored his impression in Cambodia. The basic question, however, was to determine to what extent one could be cooperative in problems of this kind. The Secretary said he wished to make it clear that as far as any allegations of U.S. participation in plots versus Cambodia were concerned, there was absolutely nothing in it. In fact, we had made the strongest representation to both the Thais and the Vietnamese. Mr. Hammarskjold observed that the implication in the matter of the Thais and Vietnamese was obvious. Son Sann had told him that he found it difficult to believe the United States did not know about the plots and asserted that the United States should have informed the Cambodian Government. The Secretary said he would like to have an opportunity to talk further with Mr. Hammarskjold about this general matter.

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116. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, May 20, 1959—5 p.m.

1500. Reference: Seoul's 588 to Department, Saigon 6, Bangkok 6, Phnom Penh 2.[2]

1. Seems to me we confronted two major problems here (A) leftist trend in execution Cambodia's neutrality policy during past year coupled with growing Communist influence, and (B) Cambodia's relations with GVN.

2. There are of course number of related problems of direct concern to us such as Sihanouk's mercurial temperament and instability; deterioration Cambodian attitude toward US; narrow, self-seeking posture of French Ambassador, coupled with ingrained suspicion

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/5–2059. Secret; Limited Distribution. Repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Another copy of this telegram with handwritten marginal notes, apparently by Askew, is included in the microfiche supplement.

[2] Document 112.

French colonials that US seeking supplant French influence; and Cambodia's relations with Thailand. However, these of lesser magnitude at present from standpoint our policy objectives.

3. Would also appear that solution first of these two major problems in large measure dependent upon prior solution to second. Don't mean suggest we devote our attention exclusively RKG–GVN relations before undertaking Communist issue, but seriously doubt latter can be dealt with effectively until there is distinct turn for better Cambodian relations with VN.

4. Present poisoned atmosphere works solely advantage Communists and longer it continues more pronounced will, I fear, be RKG's drift to left. Cambodians' fear of GVN is so intense and engrossing that it tends blind them Communist danger, and this fear being fed by backing GVN still giving Cambodian dissidents.

5. All evidence available to us here indicates that Diem's contention to contrary, Sihanouk enjoys support great majority Cambodian people and opposition scattered and virtually powerless. He is strong man of Cambodia and likely continue to be so for foreseeable future and feel essential that Diem be convinced this fact.

6. Seems to me therefore that tactics GVN have been following run counter very objective it seeking, namely, elimination Communist danger here, and can conceivably lead to point where Sihanouk will become so deeply enmeshed Communist toils that he will be unable extract himself.

7. In view these considerations, thoroughly agree Parsons reference telegram that we should do everything we can check and if possible reverse present disastrous course Cambodian-VN relations. Realize that it would be unrealistic to expect we could dissipate in short time suspicion, distrust, and, indeed, hostility Cambodians have harbored for centuries toward Annamites and which, I gather, is reciprocated by contempt with which VN regard Khmers. Rather, best we could hope for is creation some sort of modus vivendi which with passage time may gradually lead change basic attitudes.

8. In pursuing this objective, believe we should seek to obtain cooperation, or at least moral support, free Asian states such as Japan, Thailand, Laos, India, Philippines, Malaya and Burma, on grounds to their advantage there be improvement RKG–GVN relations. Suggest we also endeavor obtain cooperation French whose influence so far RKG concerned far greater than that any other country. UK and Australia might likewise be requested play supporting role. Recognize however that while others may be willing provide interference, US in final analysis must carry ball.

9. Fully share Durbrow's view (Saigon's 2402 to Department, Bangkok 448, CINCPAC POLAD 231, Phnom Penh 512)[3] that we should proceed slowly and cautiously. Nevertheless, if our efforts are to have any effect, believe essential it be made clear both RKG and GVN that it USG's policy work toward their rapprochement and hence such measures as Durbrow and I may propose done with full knowledge and approval USG.

10. As seen from Phnom Penh, following list actions which could advantageously be taken pursuance objective:

a. Encourage RKG and GVN continue press truce.

b. Continue press GVN cease support Cambodian dissidents.

c. Seek convince Sihanouk legitimacy GVN concern that VN Communists using Cambodian territory base operations against GVN. Intelligence reports, other than those GVN origin, would be particularly helpful this regard. Agree Durbrow that French preferably take lead in this and consider good chance Gorce will do so if given strong and specific instructions that effect by Quai d'Orsay.

d. Encourage GVN and RKG exchange information re movement VN Communist bands and seek induce Sihanouk take active measures against such bands. This again matter which might preferably be raised with him by French.

e. Press for resumption discussions re execution currency provisions Paris Accords.

f. Urge re-establishment payment agreement and resumption trade between two countries.

g. As Durbrow suggests, urge RKG and GVN arrange secret meeting emissaries to work out preliminary arrangements re (d), (e) and (f).

h. Seek induce RKG and GVN strengthen their diplomatic missions Saigon and Phnom Penh by assignment competent and trusted representatives.

Should Department agree advisability action along above lines, will, should it so desire, outline in greater detail our ideas re procedure and timing steps to be taken this end of line.

Trimble

[3] Dated May 14. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/5–1459; included in the microfiche supplement)

117. National Intelligence Estimate[1]

NIE 67–59 *Washington, May 26, 1959.*

CAMBODIA'S INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

The Problem

To estimate probable developments in Cambodia's international orientation over the next year or so.

Conclusions

1. Cambodia's orientation and political future rest essentially on Prince Norodom Sihanouk, who will almost certainly continue to be the dominant figure in the Cambodian scene. Although his government has increased its relations with the Bloc and Communist influence in Cambodia has markedly increased in the past three years, his international policy, widely supported by his compatriots, remains one of neutrality between East and West. (Paras. 6–7, 9–10, 20)

2. The increased Communist presence has been in large part both the cause and the result of Cambodia's poor relations with Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Thailand. These neighbors, fearing that Sihanouk's policies may result in a Communist Cambodia, have supported dissident Cambodian plots against him and have thus increased his suspicions of them. In the process, US-Cambodian relations have become strained. (Paras. 6, 17–19)

3. The counterbalancing of Communist influence in Cambodia has suffered because the French and the US have sometimes worked at cross purposes. The achievement of better French-US cooperation will be hindered by the determination of the French to preserve their present special position in Cambodia and their suspicion that the US is attempting to encroach upon that position. (Paras. 14–15)

4. We believe that Sihanouk will seek to continue Cambodia's neutral course. The actual nature of his course will probably depend to a large degree on his relations with Vietnam. The deep suspicions on both sides will probably continue, as will Sihanouk's belief that the US could moderate Vietnam's hostility toward him. A Thai or

[1] Source: Department of State, INR–NIE Files. Secret. According to a note on the covering page, this estimate, prepared by the CIA, INR, and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and The Joint Staff, was submitted by the CIA to the U.S. Intelligence Board on May 26. All members of the USIB concurred with it with the exception of the representative of the AEC, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, the Director of the National Security Agency, and the representative of the FBI, all of whom abstained on the grounds that the subject was outside their jurisdiction.

Vietnamese-sponsored move against the impulsive Sihanouk might drive him to some hasty action which could damage US interests in Southeast Asia. (Paras. 20–22)

5. Over the next year or so Sihanouk will almost certainly continue to have the power to check any increase in Communist influence. However, unless Sihanouk uses his power to this end, the time may come when he might not be strong enough to take the necessary steps to preserve Cambodia's neutral status. (Paras. 23–24)

[Here follows the "Discussion" section, which is included in the microfiche supplement.]

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118. Airgram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

G–65 *Washington, June 5, 1959—11:40 p.m.*

Saigon's 2447;[2] Phnom Penh's 1500[3] and 1510.[4]

A. Department welcomes various recommendations submitted by Phnom Penh and Saigon and believes it perhaps helpful summarize current Department views of problems facing US in Cambodia. Summary follows:

1. Agree Phnom Penh's 1500 major problems are (a) leftist trend execution Cambodia's neutrality policy coupled with growing Communist influence and (b) RKG–GVN relations.

2. View past experience foregoing problems unlikely to be resolved by RKG and GVN of own accord and in fact apt become more acute unless Free World influence exerted persistently on both countries.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/5–2359. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Askew and cleared by Mendenhall, Swezy, Kocher, Parsons, and Looram. Also sent to Saigon as G–113 and repeated to Bangkok, Paris, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 2447, May 20, the Embassy in Saigon predicted that the United States might have some success in ameliorating South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations if Nhu could be induced to desist from covert operations, if the French could convince Sihanouk of the danger, and if pressure could be brought on Diem to try a rapprochement. The Embassy recommended pressing the two governments to nominate trusted emissaries to meet secretly and work out the details of a solution. The Embassy suggested Nhiek Tioulong as a Cambodian emissary. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/5–2059)

[3] Document 116.

[4] In telegram 1510, May 22, the Embassy in Phnom Penh agreed with the suggestions outlined by the Embassy in Saigon in telegram 2447. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/5–2259)

3. Also agree Phnom Penh's 1500 some amelioration second listed problem essential precondition for advance on first problem.

4. US and France at present possess greatest potential for influencing situation to benefit Free World with US potential greater in Viet-Nam and French in Cambodia.

5. Prospects for effective US-French cooperation and coordination these problems still dimmed by probability French in Cambodia concerned primarily with maintenance French position including retention Sihanouk's favor and in view other past divergencies US and French views on SEA problems (particularly effect of Cambodian neutrality) which probably not resolved despite recent more favorable indications (Paris' 4301 and Phnom Penh's 1511 and 1534).[5]

6. Despite considerations foregoing subpara believe it essential maintain close contact and coordinate major US actions with French in order minimize French resentment and possibility further French unilateral actions harming US and Free World interests such as Gorce activities at time Cambodian coup plots.

7. In line Phnom Penh's 1500 believe it desirable GVN, RKG, and GOF be fully aware it US policy encourage improvement relations between GVN and RKG. GOF considered fully informed (Deptel 4466 to Paris).[6] Also believe RKG aware (para 7 Phnom Penh's 1441).[7] In fact, may be necessary exercise care avoid allowing RKG presume US taking full responsibility for RKG–GVN relations (Deptel 999 to Phnom Penh)[8] since Cambodians all too inclined renounce own responsibility and place onus for their relations with Free World on latter, mainly on US. Nevertheless, we should continue to impress RKG with friendly US interest this problem and readiness be helpful when feasible. Although GVN undoubtedly recognizes US making effort to improve GVN–RKG relations, it believed desirable reiterate formally on appropriate occasion that this US policy reemphasizing reasons therefor and again stressing great importance US attaches to it.

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[5] In these telegrams, May 23, 22, and 29, the Embassies in Paris and Phnom Penh reported conversations with French officials who promised cooperation in attempting to improve relations between Cambodia and South Vietnam and Cambodia and the United States. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/5–2359, 601.5151H/5–2259, and 601.5151H/5–2959, respectively)

[6] In telegram 4466, May 19, the Department instructed the Embassy to stress to the French that in an approach to Sihanouk about border problems they should also include advice for a general improvement in South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/5–1959)

[7] In paragraph 7 of telegram 1441, May 7, Trimble reported that although Son Sann was bitter toward South Vietnam, he promised his full support for the U.S. rapprochement and indicated Sihanouk would also cooperate. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/5–759)

[8] In telegram 999, May 19, the Department suggested that the Embassy emphasize to Son Sann that the ultimate responsibility for improvement in relations rested with South Vietnam and Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/5–1659)

8. Department as yet perceives no purpose to be served by formal direct US involvement this time and considers background role comprising primarily cautious exertion influence on both parties to take initiative (or desist from certain actions) most useful for present. Thus we should continue urge both parties avoid inflaming atmosphere specifically maintaining press truce and moderation in public statements. Nevertheless should two countries again lock horns over some specific incident or reach impasse in negotiations which threatens another serious explosion in relations US may find it necessary take more active role, e.g. as channel of communication or possibly use of good offices if requested provided such action holds reasonable prospects of reducing tensions rather than serving merely incur resentment against US. Each case must be judged on ad hoc basis.

9. With regard specific lines of action believe we should continue press for establishment efficient and trustworthy channel of contact between GVN and RKG. Both should be urged to reinforce their existing normal missions (Phnom Penh's 1500 subpara 10 h) and to carry forward meanwhile current proposals for meeting of high level secret emissaries. On latter it appears next step up to RKG (Saigon's 2472)[9] and Embassy Phnom Penh in coordination with French should be prepared urge RKG take action upon return Sihanouk.

10. Cessation of GVN support for Cambodian dissidents obviously must be sought on priority basis. RKG understandably sensitive to this action and unlikely move closer to Free World much less make concessions to GVN while latter supporting opposition. Insructions for representations to GVN on this score being prepared. However, problem undoubtedly will require persistent US efforts. Can expect French support be of little effect this field but support of other countries such as UK and Australia worth consideration.

11. View recent RKG acknowledgement illegal border activities also harmful to Cambodia and assurances it ready to cooperate on this problem with GVN, and bearing in mind reported French approach to Sihanouk on this subject (Paris 4302 to Dept),[10] prospects now reasonably favorable for some advance in this field. This may well be major subject for discussion by secret emissaries. However, problem obviously very complex and complete elimination of illegal border activities probably far beyond capacity of forces available to both countries. Therefore, believe it desirable Saigon at appropriate opportunity warn GVN not to expect unrealistic results, noting that even with best of will and exertion all-out effort RKG probably capable of improving situation only moderately. Basis information available it appears we

[9] In telegram 2472, May 23, Durbrow reported that South Vietnam had proposed a secret meeting between Cambodian Vice Premier Nhiek Tioulong and Vietnamese Vice President Tho. (*Ibid.*, 651G,51H/5–2359)

[10] Dated May 23. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/5–2359)

can realistically expect little more in near future than better exchange information and occasional coordination of action in specific sectors. Department would appreciate further Phnom Penh and Saigon appraisals of practical operational aspects this border control problem.

12. Reestablishment payments agreement (Phnom Penh's 1500) may have some psychological advantages but practical effects appear doubtful (Phnom Penh's despatch 93, September 15, 1958).[11] Entirely new trade agreement responsive to current economic conditions may be worthwhile but presumably would involve considerable technical negotiation. Request Phnom Penh and Saigon comments on this subject.

13. Settlement Paris financial accords, of interest primarily to RKG, evidently requires extensive technical negotiations and constitutes bargaining point GVN probably unwilling concede in absence progress on border control. RKG evidently again pressing matter (Phnom Penh's 1521).[12] For time being, believe Embassies Saigon and Phnom Penh might best restrict action on this problem to encouraging French, if and when considered appropriate, to continue attempts reach agreement with GVN and RKG on French role in negotiations. Meanwhile Department assembling data on accords to clarify issues involved and assist in establishing possible US line of action should such action later appear desirable.

14. Respecting growth Communist influence Cambodia, Department concerned over Son Sann insistence Communists had no hand recent poster incident and unwillingness admit Communist influence in Ministry Information (Deptel 986 to Phnom Penh).[13] Would appreciate Embassy Phnom Penh evaluation this matter as well as comment on Son Sann's suggestion that Ambassador Trimble establish contact with Secretary State Information Tim Dong (Phnom Penh's 1483).[14]

B. Foregoing not intended constitute instructions for immediate representations or other actions by addressees except for comments requested subparas A 11, 12 and 14. However, it may be used as guidance for dealing with problems as opportunity arises and in absence further instructions. View complexity of basic problems complicated by need deal with at least three foreign governments at four points contact (Phnom Penh, Paris, Saigon, Washington) believe it highly desirable not allow preoccupation with individual phases obscure outline overall situation and it necessary exert care not cross

[11] Not printed. (*Ibid.*, 451G.51H/9–1559)

[12] In telegram 1521, May 26, Trimble reported that Son Sann had raised the issue of settlement of the Paris financial accords as part of the overall settlement of Cambodian-South Vietnamese relations. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/5–2659)

[13] The Department received this information from Ambassador Nong Kimny and passed it to the Embassy in Phnom Penh in telegram 986, May 14. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/5–1460)

[14] Dated May 18. (*Ibid.*, 611.51H/5–1859)

wires. Foregoing paras intended assist in determining framework for action on individual phases as opportunities develop. Any comments and recommendations you may care make would be welcome.

Dillon

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119. Editorial Note

Prince Sihanouk visited Saigon August 3–5 for a series of private conversations with President Ngo Dinh Diem. Cambodian political, financial, and military advisers to Sihanouk also held discussions with their Vietnamese counterparts. The discussions were "private" and covered the range of Cambodian-South Vietnamese problems. In their discussions with U.S. representatives, Cambodian and South Vietnamese officials stressed the cordial nature of the meetings and the apparent success of the rapprochement.

In an August 13 memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs J. Graham Parsons, the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Daniel V. Anderson, stated that the visit was an important step toward improved relations between the two countries, a major objective of U.S. policy. Still, Anderson warned, the future was uncertain and South Vietnamese-Cambodian relations could easily deteriorate. Anderson recommended that the United States not attempt to press its advantage in Cambodia for the time being to avoid a swing to the left by Sihanouk, that it allow Cambodia itself to deal with the problem of Communist subversion, that the United States react moderately to expected Cambodian "compensatory" gestures toward the Sino-Soviet bloc, that Sihanouk be ostensibly taken into U.S. confidence about major developments in the area, and that the United States approach the South Vietnamese on Khmer dissidents' activities. Anderson stated that while he was suggesting "laying off" the Cambodians in the political sphere, he recommended trying to make headway on matters of economic reform. (Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, U.S.-Cambodian Relations; included in the microfiche supplement) These recommendations were sent as guidelines to the Embassy in Phnom Penh. (Telegram 153 to Phnom Penh, August 21; Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/8–1059; included in the microfiche supplement)

On the question of concern over clandestine radio attacks on Sihanouk by Diem, Alfred leS. Jenkins of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs sent Parsons a memorandum on July 8, which reviewed the

issue and suggested that the United States attempt to locate the transmitter for possible use in a démarche to Diem. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/7–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

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120. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, September 19, 1959—3 p.m.

351. 1. Trends in government and public opinion discernible since August 31 bomb incident[2] point to likelihood rapid deterioration RKG–GVN relations. Increasing nervousness evident at high levels RKG due growing suspicion GVN encouraging Sam Sary–Son Ngoc Thanh dissidents. These suspicions supported by stepping up of dissident activities since Sihanouk–Diem talks. So far no evidence change in RKG's stated determination improve relations with neighbors and free world, and situation Laos has probably added to Sihanouk's growing concern Communist pressures. However, considering that RKG policy toward free world conditioned in large measure by its relations with neighbors, abrupt shift in opposite direction could occur.

2. Evidences of augmenting dissident activities are chiefly recently increased border crossings. Three Free Khmer armed members in uniform, bearing incriminating documents, arrested Takeo province August 29, interrogated and executed. These confessed having been trained GVN sabotage school Cantho. Also ten armed Vietnamese captured same area September 1, admitted being agents Khmer dissident movement. Additional worry to RKG is continuation clandestine radio broadcasts which known emanate from Vietnam territory.

3. So far as we aware no concrete evidence Sam Sary actually responsible bomb attempt. However, RKG convinced he is. Arrest as bomb suspect of Vietnamese known to have had close relations former

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/9–1959. Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Repeated priority to Saigon and to CINCPAC, Bangkok, and Paris.

[2] On August 31, a bomb exploded in the Royal Palace killing Protocol Director Prince Norodom Vakrivan and a servant and wounding other servants. The device was hidden in a lacquer box which was delivered that day to the Palace as a gift for the Queen. Just before Prince Vakrivan opened the box, the King and Queen left the room for an interview. (Telegrams 263 and 280 from Phnom Penh, August 31 and September 2; *ibid.*, 751H.11/8–3159 and 751H.11/9–259) On September 1, President Eisenhower sent his condolences and expressed his outrage and shock at the assassination attempt. (Secto 41 from London, September 1; *ibid.*, 751H.11/9–159)

GVN representative Hieu adds to accumulating suspicions, especially since Hieu incriminated in Dap Chhuon affair (Embassy telegram 345).[3] Rumors Sam Sary may be working with Viet Minh have been largely discounted by RKG, despite arrest three armed Viet Minh agents Kampot province August 27. RKG sources have remarked Sam Sary has not denied charges he responsible for August 31 attempt; latter so far not mentioned by dissident radio.

4. Department aware manner in which Communists have capitalized on suspicion Sam Sary responsible for bombing by dragging up charges "imperialists" supporting him and similar efforts create impression US ultimately responsible (Embassy telegram 281).[4] Presumably as result our protest (Embassy telegram 309),[5] Sihanouk in speeches September 9 and 15 condemned pro-Communist press, also flayed these papers in September 12 editorial his new vernacular newspaper *Nationalist.* Communist press has now virtually dropped subject. However, this does not reduce effectiveness word-of-mouth propaganda in which Communist expert and which is gaining momentum (interesting note no mention possibility Thai support dissident activities).

5. We are no means convinced GVN still backing Sam Sary. However, if it is, feel GVN is betting on man with no popular support and that it overlooks probability that in any revolutionary situation here most likely gainers would be Communists. On other hand, possibility Sam Sary supported by Viet Minh can not be completely discounted, since effect his activities has been turn RKG attention away from Communist danger in direction Vietnam. In addition, dissident radio has followed Communist line that Cambodia gained independence only after Geneva conference. Possibility should also be considered that support GVN allegedly giving dissidents may be due Communist sympathies or even more likely anti-Diem disaffection in certain segments GVN.

6. Sihanouk's confidential advisor Barre, presumably acting on former's instructions, has suggested US might be able help in calling attention GVN to deteriorating situation. Told Embassy officers September 16, and again September 17 Sihanouk considering calling me in for frank discussion problem.

7. Believe it would be inadvisable reject request from Sihanouk for such assistance, which this time can be expected to be private and discreet, as contrasted Stung Treng incident public appeal and consequences. Sihanouk impressed with USG efforts make possible August Saigon talks and I believe genuinely grateful roles played American

[3] Dated September 17. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/9–1759)
[4] Dated September 2. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/9–259)
[5] Dated September 8. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/9–859)

Embassy Saigon and Phnom Penh in bringing them about. Fortunately latent suspicion US may be involved with Sam Sary has not yet reappeared RKG top levels but might do so should we turn down anticipated call from Sihanouk. Latter may come next week.

8. We aware Diem not easy man convince but feel we should consider discussing matter candidly with him, emphasizing to GVN's advantage take corrective measures. Could point up desirability taking such specific actions as police closing down or possibly jamming illegal dissident radio, inhibiting Sam Sary's activities by protective custody of himself and other dissident leaders, undertaking that GVN discuss problem privately at high level with RKG. Diem might also be prevailed upon have GVN issue formal statement denying GVN supports Sary–Thanh, but this would be ineffectual unless supported by more positive acts along preceding lines.

9. Our efforts here would be concentrated on calming Sihanouk's apprehensions, evidencing US concern these problems and willingness cooperate fullest extent possible. We would thus gain time for resolution. Would seek prevail upon Sihanouk need for rapid, discreet but not hasty action, impress upon him essential that present Cambodian doubts not be reflected in his public statements for press, underscore fact that questions need time in order obtain solutions acceptable both sides. Should thus take advantage Son Sann's absence at UNGA in view his basic enmity towards Vietnam and highly emotional approach to GVN–RKG differences. Meanwhile suggest our intelligence sources throughout SEA redouble search for information who actually responsible for August 31 bomb attempt, since we need know in order formulate our own position. Furthermore, our overt and covert propaganda effort might concentrate on pinning blame for bombing on Communists.

10. Further suggest we again discreetly urge both here and in Saigon, appointment representatives of high caliber who have confidence own government's top levels. Nhan liked here and impressed Sihanouk favorably at time Saigon talks, but evident to RKG he carries little weight with GVN, while Sum Hieng definitely second-rate in addition being violently anti-Vietnamese.

11. Believe these suggestions accord with considerations Embassy telegram 1500 and Department's G–65.[6] Would appreciate Department's and Saigon's thoughts. Meanwhile, will take advantage informal visit Saigon September 21 discuss these problems with Durbrow.

Trimble

[6] Documents 116 and 118.

121. Memorandum of a Converation, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, September 21, 1959, 10:30 a.m.[1]

SecDel/MC/17

PARTICIPANTS

US	*Cambodia*
The Secretary	His Excellency M. Son Sann, Vice Premier and Foreign Minister
Assistant Secretary Wilcox	His Excellency Nong Kimny, Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Assistant Secretary Parsons	

SUBJECT

U.S. Relations with Cambodia

The Cambodian Foreign Minister expressed his thanks for the understanding position taken by the United States with regard to the Cambodian policy of neutrality. Following long talks with Mr. Parsons this spring in Phnom Penh and many conversations since with Amb. Trimble and Secretary Seaton[2] there were no more U.S.-Cambodian misunderstandings and the way was clear for further cooperation and for frank exploration of mutual problems of interest. Son Sann was grateful also for our moderating influence with Thailand and Vietnam. He expressed his thanks to the Secretary also for the most valuable program of aid to Cambodia and for our having sent Secretary Seaton out for the dedication of the Friendship Road. This was a fine road and most valuable for Cambodia's future.

In this connection Son Sann said that he knew the Congress was reducing aid funds and emphasized Cambodia was making great efforts to deserve the aid offered by the United States. Following a two year program of economic development Cambodia was now embarked on a five-year plan following which it was hoped there could be a balanced budget. He hoped the United States could assist in bringing about the accomplishment of the plan by keeping up present

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by Parsons on September 21 and approved by Herter on September 24. The source text indicates the meeting took place in Suite 28–A. Both Herter and Son Sann were the heads of their countries' delegations to the U.N. General Assembly.

[2] Secretary of the Interior Seaton represented the United States at the inauguration of the Khmer-American Friendship Highway, the major feature of the U.S. economic aid program to Cambodia which linked the interior of the country with the new port facilities at Sihanoukville (Kompon Son). A memorandum of conversation among Sihanouk and Seaton and other Embassy officials, July 21, is *ibid.*, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 2–B.1 Port Highway Inauguration, 1959. According to a memorandum from Dillon to the President, Seaton's visit and "the Secretary's bearing and personality evoked auspicious responses from the highest level of Cambodian officials." (Memorandum from Dillon to Eisenhower, July 28; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Administrative Series, Dillon, C. Douglas)

aid levels. The sums involved were important to Cambodia but he hoped they were not large for the United States. If the plan were successfully carried out Cambodia would be much more self-sufficient and his government would ask for less aid thereafter which indeed was its desire.

The Secretary said he was glad that the Foreign Minister understood our difficulties with the volume of aid funds available. He said we would have to reexamine most carefully what was asked of us but the Minister could be sure that we would look at his proposals with the greatest sympathy.

The Foreign Minister said that he would like to use this opportunity to ask several questions. The Thai Foreign Minister had come to Phnom Penh not long ago with excellent results as regards improving Thai-Cambodian relations.[3] He had also spoken of a sort of union of the South Eastern Asian community and had continued discussion of this at Saigon. The Foreign Minister wondered whether the Secretary thought well of the proposal. The Secretary said that he thought it a very interesting idea and that he had always thought well of developing economic cooperation on a regional basis. Son Sann went on to say that actually most of the economic cooperation in the region was under ECAFE as was for instance the program of development of the Mekong River. This proposal looked more to meetings of Ministers in different places for exchange of views on political and diplomatic questions. Mr. Parsons added that we understood this had developed as a purely Asian initiative and that in contrast to Europe where there had been many opportunities for greater regional exchanges of views and cooperation, in Southeast Asia this had been greatly limited in the past. Accordingly this idea had seemed like a very interesting one and one which should be carried forward by the countries of that area if they thought well of it.

The Secretary said that he wanted to take the opportunity to say that if Cambodia was interested in joining the IMF and the IBRD we would be glad to do anything we could to help. Son Sann explained that this year it would not be possible to take steps in this direction. He added there were two major policy considerations which preoccupied people in Cambodia at present. One was acceptance of the Cambodian neutrality policy and the second one was to make sure that the country could meet any obligations which it might take on in the international field. Cambodia would wish to be sure of being able to meet its obligations to the Bank and the Fund before joining. Reverting again to the question of contacts with Cambodia's neighbors the Minister

[3] Information on Thanat Khoman's official visit to Cambodia, June 11–13, is in despatch 76 from Phnom Penh, September 14. (Department of State, Central Files, 651H.92/9–1459)

said that the Thai Foreign Minister had spoken about his idea to Prince Sihanouk and while the Prince was in favor of more contacts and had proved this by going to Saigon himself, nevertheless he thought it would be better to leave for the future any formalization of the contacts in meetings which might develop. It was his view that the situation was not yet ripe for Thanat Khoman's proposal.

The Secretary then expressed his shock at the recent bombing attempt against the royal family and his gratification that the Queen had escaped. Son Sann expressed his appreciation and also mentioned how pleased the royal family had been to receive the President's cable. Further careful investigation of the handwriting on the card (of an American named Baker) enclosed with the lethal package had proven that the rebel, Sam Sary, was responsible for the attempted assassination. Sam Sary who had been in Thailand had now crossed over to South Vietnam through Laos but without the knowledge or help of the Lao. President Diem was now more cooperative about these dissident Cambodians but it was possible there were still elements there sympathetic to Sam Sary's efforts on a non-official basis. There was some thought that perhaps Sam Sary had gone on to Hong Kong and he hoped the United States would provide any information we have as we had been brought into this matter by the effort to fix responsibility on us. Mr. Parsons said that he did not recall any recent reports on Sam Sary's whereabouts although we understood that he had been in Thailand and Vietnam different times.

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122. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, September 22, 1959—7 p.m.

942. After most useful talk with Trimble 21st,[2] seems clear if we are not lose ground gained from Sihanouk–Diem Saigon meeting and if we want prevent possible serious deterioration relations and Cambodian swing to left I should see Diem soonest. Under instructions I should tell him how serious situation can become for whole free

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/9–2259. Secret; Limit Distribution. Also sent to Phnom Penh and CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Bangkok and Paris.

[2] No record of the Trimble–Durbrow conversation has been found. In telegram 377 from Phnom Penh, September 24, Ambassador Trimble fully agreed with the course of action proposed by Durbrow. (*Ibid.*, 651G.51H/9–2459)

world position SEA unless he as statesman joins us in overcoming Sihanouk growing belief Sam Sary, with possible GVN connivance, carried out palace bombing. Apart from his taking positive steps to quell this belief he should be [garble] take positive steps to follow through on Saigon meeting to create better RKG–GVN relations.

We have tried in past accomplish this but except for helping bring about Saigon meeting we have not been successful in stopping such stupid moves as Dap Chhuon plot despite several strong warnings and practically telling Diem and Nhu we knew exactly what was going on. I am of firm belief "clever" Nhu has convinced Diem they can go ahead with their stupidities no matter what we say because we "need" Vietnam and would not dare take any drastic step to hurt them. With Lao situation as it is we cannot further cut military aid and D.S. aid is going to be cut considerably because of lack of funds to point where threat of further cut would be counterproductive because we would hurt our interests more in present situation and GVN knows that.

Given these "facts of life" how can we effectively induce Diem to come to his senses about Cambodia? After considerable thought I believe we must use his sensitivities to outside criticism and his deep apprehension Lao situation in effort shock him into reality. It very evident he was very shocked and hurt by Colegrove articles and fact Congress took them seriously.[3] On other hand he apparently now relieved Williams, Gardiner, and I "saved the day" by putting up strong defense of regime and aid program. Diem and Nhu have been told Colegrove and other correspondents have unpublished information which may be damning to regime. We have reiterated this in connection with possible adverse reactions if GVN refuses seat assembly opposition members.

Therefore, believe I should be instructed tell Diem strong terms:

1. While we hope we successful quelling Colegrove allegations many Congressmen and correspondents will raise serious questions re Diem regime and its reputed anti-Communist attitude, if Sihanouk puts out white paper on Dap Chhuon plot and bombing incident which implicates GVN deeply in these affairs.

2. I should reiterate we now have concrete evidence GVN deeply implicated in Dap Chhuon affair which confirms information Sihanouk apparently has.

3. I should state we have [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] compelling reasons believe Free Khmer Radio located in VN and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] be glad to help find it so GVN could put it out of business, RKG also convinced it in Vietnam.

[3] See *Foreign Relations*, 1958–1960, vol. I, p. 220, footnote 2.

Since this Radio is still broadcasting, despite our suggestion, and it has not denied any connection with perpetrators of the bombing incident, this further arouses Sihanouk's suspicions.

4. Anti-Sihanouk forces have been permitted to operate training camps in Vietnam and Cambodian exile groups have received support from VN. Furthermore, firm evidence available to us indicates several Free Khmer armed military cadre recently arrested in Cambodia who confessed they trained in VN. Whether those recently arrested actually trained here beside point, Sihanouk seems convinced they were.

5. RKG has recently arrested Vietnamese, who was friend of Hieu and who has been identified by maid who received bomb package, as person who delivered it to her. Whether this right or wrong, this adds to RKG suspicions.

6. Despite all this, since Saigon meeting which Sihanouk initiated, latter has taken definite steps against left-wing Cambodian papers, denounced Communists in his newspaper *Nationalist* and shown he now deeply concerned Communist activities Cambodia.

7. It therefore interest all he continue this attitude but if he becomes firmly convinced GVN at least encouraged bombing, is sending Free Khmers Cambodia, is permitting radio continue function and does not desire follow through on tentative agreements reached Saigon meeting, GVN's and free world interests can be seriously hurt, when all should be working form solid front in view Communist aggression Laos.

8. Therefore, if as we understand, Sihanouk thinking of presenting his proposed white paper to UNGA, excellent GVN anti-Communist reputation in free world would be immeasurably hurt, because only Communists would gain from such "exposé", which would be based on certain incriminating known facts.

9. In view compelling information available to us and others, it would be most difficult for friends Vietnam defend it against white paper charges which would give impression GVN not interested building solid front SEA against Communists who are now trying take over Laos. In this event the US would have to make it publicly clear that we have for many months urged GVN to take measures which would allay RKG suspicions and actively improve relations between two countries.

10. Unless Sihanouk, by positive GVN action, is convinced his suspicions unfounded, he will drop current anti-Communist action and move even further to left. If this should take place GVN would not only have worry about Communist threat on Lao frontier but along entire western frontier and such development would greatly jeopardize [garble] Lao situation.

11. Therefore, I instructed urge Diem in strongest terms:

A. Take effective steps locate and eliminate radio. We, hereby, formally offer assist GVN in this respect.

B. Make formal offer assist RKG every way apprehend perpetrators bombing.

C. Make public GVN announcement or send formal note to RKG stating that no groups whatsoever will be permitted conduct anti-RKG activities on or from GVN soil. If Sam Sary is or can be found in Vietnam, arrest and deport him for his anti-Sihanouk activities, advising RKG of this step. If he is not here, assure RKG he will not be permitted enter. GVN could make it clear it does not know whether Sam Sary involved bombing, but GVN taking above action against him for his publicly known attacks on Sihanouk in order to maintain improved climate relations between two countries following Diem–Sihanouk meeting.

D. Take effective steps implement various suggestions at Saigon meeting mutually to work out problems.

E. If Diem does these we will use our best influence to see that they are reciprocated by RKG, and will continue defend GVN as a stout free world bulwark as we have done in the past.

F. If he does not we will not be in position to defend GVN actions with correspondents and Congressmen nor will we be able to defend Vietnam in any UNGA discussions based on a possible RKG white paper. Such a development would have most serious repercussions for Vietnam's future and probably would lessen Vietnam's good name among Asian powers as well.

If the Department agrees with this general approach consideration might be given to have same line taken in talks with Thuan in Department.

Trimble and I agreed when he next sees Sihanouk former should state he had had frank talk with me and that we here have no evidence indicating GVN implicated in any way bombing. Furthermore in regard allegation arrested Free Khmers said they trained in Can Tho, we doubt it would have been possible to train Free Khmers there without it being known to considerable number of Americans living there. Therefore, strong possibility exists alleged Free Khmer actually Vietcong trying embroil RKG–GVN relations.[4]

Durbrow

[4] In telegram 566 to Saigon, also sent to Phnom Penh, September 23, the Department instructed Durbrow to inform Diem of U.S. concern about Vietnamese actions that might damage relations with Cambodia and to strongly suggest that South Vietnam stop Cambodian dissident activities on its soil and cooperate in apprehending the dissidents. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/9–2259; included in the microfiche supplement)

In telegram 983 from Saigon, September 25, Durbrow reported that he had met with Diem and made the points as instructed. Diem responded that South Vietnam had made an effort to improve relations but received little encouragement from Sihanouk. Durbrow then detailed U.S. knowledge of various Vietnamese anti-Cambodian activities, which Diem did not attempt to deny or refute. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/9–2559; included in the microfiche supplement)

123. Editorial Note

Foreign Minister Son Sann met in Washington with Department of State officials on September 26 to discuss topics of mutual concern. According to a briefing memorandum prepared on September 25 by Daniel V. Anderson for Assistant Secretary Parsons, Son Sann was most anxious to discuss the question of U.S. economic aid for Cambodia's Five-Year Plan. (Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Son Sann's Visit, Sept.–Oct. 1959)

During the discussion on U.S. aid, Son Sann asked for more aid, but was told that because of the requirement of Congressional appropriation, the United States could not give assurances of future aid. Parsons assured Son Sann that while he expected the general foreign aid package to be less, he believed reductions in aid to Cambodia would not be severe. Parsons offered to coordinate with Cambodian officials to ensure that U.S. aid was used as effectively as possible. (Memorandum of conversation, September 26; *ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement) Other topics discussed were reported in separate memoranda, all September 26. (Department of State, Central Files, 851H.2395/9–2659, and *ibid.*, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 20–A.4 Memos of Conversations)

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124. Memorandum From the Acting Director of the International Cooperation Administration (Saccio) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, September 28, 1959.

SUBJECT

Ambassador Trimble's Letter Concerning U.S. Aid to Cambodia[2]

Ambassador Trimble has sent Mr. Riddleberger a copy of the letter he addressed to you on August 28, in which he listed a number of conclusions he had reached concerning the United States aid pro-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5–MSP/9–2859. Confidential.

[2] Attached to a covering letter from Trimble to Anderson, September 1. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5–MSP/9–159; included in the microfiche supplement)

gram in Cambodia. I have reviewed his thoughtful letter with deep interest; here are my comments on the several points which the Ambassador mentions.

A. *FARK Support.* The policy of pressing the Cambodians to assume a larger share of the salaries and allowances of their armed forces each year is an eminently sound one. If, as the Ambassador mentions, the point should be reached where this can be achieved only by a reduction in the size of these forces, I hope that the question of the existing force goals for Cambodia can be reexamined. Cambodia will not, in the foreseeable future have the economic capability of supporting armed forces of the present size from its own resources. I would especially urge that the State Department and the Department of Defense reconsider the necessity for an internal security force level of 31,000 in this small country. This matter may, of course, be dealt with in the Country Team paper which the Ambassador mentions in his letter. While the situation in Laos may make it inadvisable to raise the force goal question with the Cambodian Government at the moment, I believe that we should ask the Country Team to keep this matter under very close scrutiny, especially since such a large proportion of our economic aid program is devoted to the generation of local currency for military budget support.

B. *Military Construction.* This is a matter primarily of concern to the Department of Defense.

C. *Public Works.* As the Ambassador indicates, both the Country Team and the Washington agencies agreed over a year ago that no further large-scale public works projects should be financed by grant aid in Cambodia. His emphasis on technical assistance to insure proper maintenance of completed projects and of equipment is very sound.

D. *Concentration of Technical Cooperation.* I thoroughly agree with the Ambassador's proposal for concentrating technical assistance on high priority areas. The priorities he suggests seem to me appropriate, although his list appears to omit technical assistance in the maintenance of public works equipment which he quite properly stresses in the preceding paragraph of his letter. He does not comment upon the proposal to provide modest technical assistance to encourage the development of small Cambodian industries; it would appear to me that this would be an important aspect of increasing Cambodia's production and of reducing the country's future need for external aid.

E. *Coordination with Other Assistance Programs.* The increasing number of countries and multilateral agencies providing aid to Cambodia undoubtedly makes coordination of effort a most important task.

F. *Caliber of Personnel.* I was very glad to note the Ambassador's favorable comment upon the quality of USOM/Cambodia personnel. I know that the question of improving the language facility of its personnel is one which has deeply concerned the USOM and I am glad to know that this problem is being approached on an inclusive basis.

G. *Size of Staff.* The number of personnel required by USOM/Cambodia is primarily determined by the size and character of its program. While I am in full agreement with the Ambassador that the USOM staff should be kept at the minimum needed for effective operations, I am somewhat concerned at the establishment of a rigid ceiling. In our own review of the FY 1960 operational program and the proposals for FY 1961 we will be giving very close attention to this question, but I believe that the approach should first be to determine the activities to be undertaken and then the size of the staff required to carry them out, rather than to start with the number of Americans. In this connection, I am informed that the French have over 250 technicians and similar personnel in Cambodia under their substantially smaller technical and educational program.

The Ambassador's proposal for amalgamating certain USOM and Embassy administrative services is one which deserves careful study.

H. *Concentration of Personnel.* The proposal to station USOM representatives in provincial centers is one with which we fully agree. I understand that USOM has been endeavoring to move in this direction, but that it has been difficult to recruit personnel fully qualified for this difficult type of assignment. I also understand that, since the "Dap Chhuon" incident, the Cambodian authorities have been somewhat reluctant to agree to the stationing of USOM representatives in provincial centers.

I. *Mistakes and Abuses.* The subject of refund claims for past mistakes and abuses is an extremely important one. I hope that the Ambassador will continue to make this a matter of high priority and that he will impress upon the political leadership of Cambodia the necessity of settling these claims. From the information available here, we understand that the Cambodians have already taken a number of steps which should help prevent the recurrence of these abuses.

J. *Conclusion.* I am, of course, glad to note Ambassador Trimble's conclusion that the program, taken as a whole, has been very successful. As he indicates, we have no reason for complacency, especially since the Cambodian economy is relatively stagnant. Unless the country makes greater economic progress we are faced with the prospect of a continuing problem of relatively large-scale economic aid, especially for the support of the military establishment.

In addition to the question of the size of the military forces, which I have already mentioned, I would suggest that the Ambassador and the Country Team devote special attention to two major questions:

(1) Ways in which Cambodia's increasing foreign exchange reserves can be used more effectively for the country's economic development.

(2) The possibility that the Development Loan Fund might be utilized to meet some of Cambodia's needs for productive facilities.

L.J. Saccio

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125. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, October 7, 1959.

1222. Diem asked to see Gen Williams, Gardiner and me seventh to discuss Lao situation and Phoumi visit as indicated Embtel 1178.[2] In view authorization granted Deptel 650,[3] I asked see Diem alone for half an hour in order give him solid facts re continued plotting against RKG.

I opened conversation by referring to my démarche Sept 25[4] and to Diem's request that I furnish him concrete info re anti-Khmer activities. I then reviewed reasons US Govt perturbed about lack of good RKG–GVN relations, particularly in view of Lao situation and added US Govt certain that Diem is just as desirous as we to have Free World solidarity in SEA. Therefore since my govt convinced Diem not aware of activities being carried on in Viet-Nam by "some Vietnamese" against RKG, I had received instructions to give him orally several examples of such activities re which US Govt had concrete info. I added that US Govt was making this info available to him in most friendly way since it is convinced that Diem does not know about these matters or he would have stopped them.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 84, Saigon Embassy Files: FRC 66 A 878, International Political Affairs, Vietnam (GVN/Cambodia, July to Dec. 1959). Secret; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Durbrow. Repeated to Phnom Penh, Bangkok, and CINCPAC for POLAD. No time of transmission appears on the source text.

[2] In telegram 1178, October 5, Durbrow asked permission to pass on to Diem solid facts from U.S. sources which would convince him that it was in his and U.S. interest "to desist continued irresponsible plotting against RKG." (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/10–559)

[3] In telegram 650, October 5, the Department approved Durbrow's request. (*Ibid.*)

[4] See footnote 4, Document 122.

I then read in French carefully prepared paper citing considerable number concrete facts known to US Govt. English version of this statement will be furnished addressees [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

After reading paper I added US Govt is certain that Diem will do all in his power to prevent any further activities of this nature and work sincerely to bring about better relations with Cambodia. I repeated what I had said Sept 25, that developments had been favorable to Free World in SEA past year except for fact that GVN–RKG relations are far from good and if they should become worse Commies would be only ones to gain.

Diem did not interrupt me except to ask two minor questions, one a clarification and the other name of town (Rayong, Thailand) where Sam Sary is at present. After I had finished, he merely said he would be greatly astonished if what I had told him is true, but that he would investigate matter.[5]

Except for making passing remark about *Depeche* story re Slat Peau trial[6] as indication that info re Dap Chhuon plot is becoming public, I did not go into further details. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]

He then asked Gen Williams and Gardiner to join us. For next hour and half he was quite affable while explaining situation in Laos as outlined by Colonel Phoumi and his serious concern about Commies exploitation of Thai-Viet Minh agreement on Vietnamese refugees in Thailand.

Durbrow

[5] In telegram 1500, October 28, Durbrow reported that he told Diem on October 27 that he was under instructions to ask how the South Vietnamese investigation into anti-Khmer activity had gone. Diem stated that his investigations had failed to confirm the activities. Durbrow commented that "for face-saving reasons" Diem could not admit the accuracy of the U.S. information, but he was "very embarrassed." Durbrow believed Diem would curb Ngo Dinh Nhu's anti-Cambodian activities. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/10–2859; included in the microfiche supplement) The Department responded in telegram 828 to Saigon, October 31, that Durbrow had handled a difficult issue well and it was probable that anti-Khmer activities should lessen. No further démarches would appear necessary. (Department of State, Central Files, 651G.51H/10–2859)

[6] On September 30, Slat Peau, brother of Dap Chhuon, was tried in public court in Phnom Penh and sentenced to death for his role in his brother's attempted coup. Slat Peau alleged in his testimony that he was the contact between his brother and officials of South Vietnam and U.S. intelligence services. (Telegram 394 from Phnom Penh, October 1; *ibid.*, 751H.00/10–159)

126. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, October 18, 1959—6 p.m.

1363. Ladejinsky leaving for US 18th. Expects arrive Washington about 25th. He told me last night that in accordance my earlier suggestion he had brought up in final interview with Diem general question RKG–GVN relations. Without mentioning our démarches, or radio, or dissidents Diem said Vice President had been right about problem better RKG relations. According Diem Vice President during and after Sihanouk visit had warned Diem not be taken in by Sihanouk promises of better relations and Vice President had been proven correct since GVN efforts better relations have not been successful.

Following talk with Diem Ladejinsky asked his close friend the Vice President about prospects better RKG relations. Vice President said nothing about untrustworthiness of Sihanouk, but on contrary said it would be very easy to work out arrangements to have better relations if it were not for anti-RKG activities and opposition of Nhu. Ladejinsky convinced this is Vice President's sincere belief. I concur this evaluation.

Durbrow

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851G.00A/10–1859. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Phnom Penh, Bangkok, CINCPAC for POLAD, and Vientiane.

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127. Telegram From the Embassy in Vietnam to the Department of State[1]

Saigon, December 13, 1959—7 p.m.

1934. For Parsons from Durbrow, Johnson and Trimble.[2] Following summary our views and suggestions:

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 120.1451G/12–1359. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

[2] The three Ambassadors were in Dalat, Vietnam, for a 2-day conference on mutual problems.

1. Historic mutual antipathies three countries so deep-rooted that unrealistic expect any fundamental change their attitudes in short run. However, we believe by effectively playing on their short range mutual self interests, manifestations these antipathies can be somewhat reduced.

2. One basic problem is to induce Sihanouk it to his own advantage maintain tolerable relations with Thai and VN neighbors and that in common with other two, greatest danger he faces is ChiCom enemy. If Sihanouk can be convinced of latter and also convinced appeasement ChiComs will not reduce danger, should do much inhibit his oscillating diplomacy. These oscillations rather than neutrality policy per se are regarded by Thais and Vietnamese as main obstacle to better accommodation with him.

3. The basic problem is convince RTG and GVN that despite their dislike and distrust of Sihanouk they have to live with him as neighbor and their desire to remove him from power completely unrealistic. Furthermore, only effects their amateurist efforts to foster internal dissension Cambodia are to antagonize Sihanouk, divert his attention from ChiCom danger and counter-developing tendency towards more positive neutrality with Westward orientation.

4. To convince Sihanouk appeasement policy not answer to ChiCom danger we suggest consideration following additional actions:

(a) Encourage maximum contacts with Sihanouk by neutralists such as India, Burma and Indonesia who have seen their policy of appeasement fail. Sihanouk is Asian Nationalist and experience other Asians who have unsuccessfully attempted policy of neutralism more persuasive with him than that of occidental nations.

(b) Utilizing strong Malayan interest in promoting Southeast Asian grouping, encourage Malayan initiative establish contacts with RKG so that they too can acquaint Sihanouk with facts of life.

(c) Seek effective ways to bring home to Sihanouk, by playing on his fear Viet Minh, seriousness of Communist subversive and guerrilla tactics Laos and fact that same tactics could almost equally well be applied within Cambodia, particularly if Laos should succumb.

(d) Endeavor disabuse Sihanouk his belief Soviet weapons superiority, along lines previously recommended by Embassy Phnom Penh.[3] In this and in other points mentioned, it should be noted he is flattered to be in the know, particularly if it is "confidential."

[3] During his visit to Vietnam, August 3–5, Sihanouk informed his Vietnamese dinner partners at an official banquet that the Soviet Union was far superior to the United States in terms of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). (Telegram 436 from Saigon, August 11; Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/8–1159) In telegram 203 from Phnom Penh, August 17, the Embassy suggested the following courses of action to disabuse Sihanouk of his "misconception:" during a proposed visit by Lon Nol to the United States, the U.S. military would brief the Defense Minister and give him a weapons demonstration, and Ambassador Trimble would pass on confidentially to Sihanouk a modified National Intelligence Estimate on the latest comparative developments in the missile field. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/8–1759)

5. In order allay RKG suspicions we seeking induce its adherence SEATO, suggest Trimble be authorized at suitable time give Sihanouk characteristic assurances, in writing if this appears desirable, that USG has never sought and does not now seek Cambodian adherence to the Manila Pact. Trimble could also point out Pact can not be invoked with respect Cambodia except at specific request RKG. Furthermore, at no time has Cambodian adherence even been discussed within SEATO. (Johnson will check validity this latter point.)

6. Because exaggerated Thai and Cambodian respect for and confidence in UN (this applicable only small degree GVN), we consider "UN presence" in SEA, along pattern established by Beck-Friis mission and as suggested by Thanat Khoman, could play useful and constructive role, particularly with respect Thai-Cambodian relations. Not clear how this could be fitted in or coordinated with UN presence Laos, but recommend that Department explore proposal. Since GVN not member UN and Diem's concern that any UN activity can be influenced by Communist bloc, Durbrow not certain Diem would be too receptive this idea.

7. All three countries need markedly improve caliber their diplomatic representation each other's capitals, and should be brought to recognize that these rather than more distant posts call for utilization their best men. We will continue press this point. Also desirable if French would progressively replace ex-colonialists with career diplomats Phnom Penh.

8. Johnson and Durbrow should continue efforts induce cessation *all* support anti-Sihanouk dissidents and other disruptive activities including press campaigns.

9. Durbrow to press for VP Tho to visit Phnom Penh, preferably before rumored departure Tioulong, to follow through with RKG on Sihanouk Saigon meeting, particularly (a) Paris accords now that GOF and GVN have reached agreement, and (b) border control cooperation.

10. Johnson to encourage RTG to view Temple case as juridical matter.

11. Despite present sensitivity over Temple issue, Johnson and Trimble to explore possibility of Son Sann returning Thanat Khoman's visit.

12. Johnson and Trimble will also sound out present status contemplated visit Thai King and Queen to Phnom Penh.

13. Indications past seven months show Sihanouk becoming increasingly concerned Viet Minh and domestic Communist activities within Cambodia as well as being more alive implications international Communism. Durbrow and Johnson will continue furnish any available evidence Sihanouk's evolution this regard to GVN and RTG.

14. With respect to issue VN refugees in Thailand,[4] Mau raised subject in conversation with three of us Decembr 11. However, he did not make issue of matter and spoke only of "40,000" who had registered for repatriation to DRV. In reply to suggestion GVN make gesture to receive some repatriates, he replied GVN Embassy Bangkok had "lost so much face" now would not be timely. Matter was left that presence in Saigon of thus [*Thai*] Foreign Minister in connection forthcoming visit Thai King and Queen would give opportunity for discussion problem.

15. We continue believe best course is for GVN not give public play to results Thai repatriation poll and await breakdown [called for in] DRV-Thai Red Cross agreement. In meantime, Durbrow should continue urge GVN come up with more constructive proposals to be made to RTG for solution this problem.

16. Even apart from repatriation issue, relations between Thailand and GVN are not as close and cordial as their common interests would seem dictate. Diem tends to be contemptuous of Thais, including Thai military capabilities, and Thais fear and distrust more energetic Vietnamese. Generally cool Thai-GVN relations contrast sharply with generally good Thai-Burmese relations in spite of many potential sources of friction between latter two countries. Part of explanation is respective personalities Diem, Sarit, and Ne Win, first two being basically antipathetic. Forthcoming visit Thai King whom Diem respects, will be helpful, but can not be expected produce any fundamental changes. As additional move, Durbrow and Johnson intend seek encourage exchange military and other visits. In view, however, likelihood Cambodians would consider any military visits as aimed at them, best way arrange such get-togethers would be have GVN military visit Thailand in connection with SEATO exercises.

17. All three of us feel meeting has been most useful and appreciate your having jogged us into finally getting together. We have had opportunity exchange ideas and information not only on subjects this telegram, but other matters common interest with which we would need not bother Department. Regards.

Durbrow

[4] Reference is to the presence in Thailand of approximately 40,000 Vietnamese refugees who fled Vietnam during World War II and the first Indochina war. The refugees were given the choice of returning to North Vietnam, South Vietnam, or remaining in northeast Thailand. For documentation, see volume XV.

128. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vietnam[1]

Washington, December 17, 1959—7:55 p.m.

1115. For Ambassadors Durbrow, Johnson, and Trimble from Parsons. Saigon's 1934.[2] Appreciate and applaud results your meeting reported reftel. Gratified you also felt meeting useful. Agree with tenor your views and suggestions, preliminary comments on some of which follow:

a) Am recommending Department ask Ambassadors Bunker, Snow, Jones and Byington for comments on your promising suggestion encourage contact between Sihanouk and leaders their host countries (Paras 4 a and b reftel).[3]

b) Shall again explore possibility obtaining data on weapons for use with Sihanouk (Para 4 d) although earlier inquiries failed reveal existence any such material in usable form. This connection would be interested impact on Lon Nol of attendance at CINCPAC weapons demonstration. Oral briefing Sihanouk by high US military figure might be effective if suitable occasion arises.

c) Re Sihanouk and SEATO (Para 5) thought occurs that he using organization as whipping boy to help invoke US responsibility for acts its SEATO partners particularly Thailand. However, agree Trimble should give him renewed oral assurances if Sihanouk again raises question.

d) Eventual UN presence (Para 6) merits consideration but believe we should not pursue subject pending clarification UN role Laos.

e) Believe we have no choice but remain alert to and promptly protest any support by Thailand and Viet-Nam to anti-Sihanouk dissidents. (Paras 2 and 8) At same time we must guard against allowing Sihanouk freedom to raise with impunity to suit his own purposes spectre of Thai or Vietnamese interference and consequent US responsibility to bring "lackeys" into line. US efforts to this end risk encouraging oscillations rather than reverse. This related to first sentence para 2. Similarly agree exchange visits (Paras 9, 11 and 12) worth exploring and encouraging if feasible. Assume Tho visit would not take place prior Sihanouk's return.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 120.1451G/12–1559. Secret; Limit Distribution. Also sent to Bangkok and Phnom Penh. Drafted by Askew; cleared by SEA, FE, and UNP; and approved by Parsons.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Done in airgram 34 to Djakarta, also sent to New Delhi and Rangoon, December 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 110.1451G/12–1359)

f) Concur your view GVN should not play up results Thai repatriation poll but in view of Bangkok's 1405[4] indicating VN refugees now permitted three choices about which Mau queried Thanat during latter's August visit, GVN might be urged offer more constructive proposals to RTG for solution this problem. Forthcoming visit to Saigon of King and Foreign Minister, neither of whom should raise presidential hackles alluded to in paragraph 16 reftel, should provide GVN useful opportunity to come forward with more realistic proposals. Change of venue for advancing such suggestions to Saigon would obviate further loss of face by GVN Embassy Bangkok and elevate discussion to more temperate level of conversation between chiefs of state concerning mutual problem of two neighboring equally anti-Communist free nations.

Dillon

[4] Dated November 27. (*Ibid.*, 292.51G22/11–2759)

129. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, January 7, 1960—2 p.m.

847. Paris for Assistant Secretary Parsons. Reference: Deptel 1649 to Bangkok, Phnom Penh 537;[2] FTB 4462.[3] Following our assessment current support of and opposition to Sihanouk within Cambodia. Although it represents our best estimate of situation, allowance must be made for some margin error in view marked reluctance Cambodians to discuss Sihanouk with foreigners except in terms of adulation, a reluctance which even more pronounced today in present quasi-police state atmosphere.

1. Support strongest among peasants who venerate Sihanouk almost as God–King and regard him as an unquestioned father and prime defender of nation's independence. Peasants, who comprise over 80 percent of population, usually politically apathetic but in emergency would undoubtedly respond forcefully to appeal of Prince.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files 751H.11/1–660. Secret. Repeated to Paris, Saigon, Bangkok, CINCPAC for POLAD, London, and Vientiane.

[2] In this telegram, January 2, the Department agreed with the Embassy in Bangkok's suggestion that U.S. and Thai officials meet to discuss the threat of Communist subversion in Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/1–260; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Not futher identified.

Same sentiments shared by urban proletariat who retain close attachment to soil, with possible exception stevedores who some extent Communist influenced. Armed forces believed now to be solidly behind Sihanouk. Those elements among them which were once sympathetic to Dap Chhuon have either seen light since their full reintegration into army or reportedly have been liquidated. National police, whose effectiveness and power have substantially increased during past year, also considered staunch in support of Prince. He has backing legislature, especially because their livelihood and sinecure largely depend on him, as well as that of great majority government functionaries. Buddhist clergy, which in first years of independence displayed certain sympathy for Son Ngoc Thanh, seems to have taken heed Sihanouk's warnings that they stay out of politics and in general now believed to give him their support. Press, including Communist, sycophantic their treatment of Sihanouk who depicted as omniscient and paragon all virtues. While this doesn't necessarily reflect their real feelings toward him, they fully aware any appreciable deviation from this approach would lead to reprisals. Radio virtual mouthpiece of Prince. Vietnamese and Chinese minorities play no role Cambodian political life at present, and as long as Sihanouk does not oppress them or shift from current neutralist line, will continue remain quiescent.

2. Attitude intelligentsia and students varies between vociferous, although in some instances lukewarm in support to deep but unarticulated dissatisfaction. While left-wing and Communist elements among them could become disaffected should he veer toward West, they generally satisfied manner in which he now conducting policy.

3. In speeches re "traitors" Sihanouk has stated that 10 percent population against him. While figure may be somewhat low, this opposition does not represent any real threat at present since it unorganized and leaderless. Also, given Sihanouk's control army, police and propaganda media, it is likely remain so. Apart from supporters and sympathizers Khmer dissidents who believed to be relatively insignificant in number, opposition now largely confined some former democratic party elements, disgruntled functionaries, certain businessmen who concerned trend toward statism or bear personal grudge against Sihanouk, and handful convinced pro-Westerns.

4. Criticism Sihanouk's internal policies unquestionably exists although rarely of his person and almost never in print. It largely concentrated in urban areas, particularly Phnom Penh. Such criticism and dissatisfaction is however factor some importance because it occurs among class which although numerically is small is most directly affected by his policies and in a position, at least indirectly, to influence him because of his sensitivity their attitude.

5. Criticism usually focused on following:

a. Increasing cost of living, although up to present peasants not affected.

b. "Voluntary" manual labor campaign which, apart from personal inconvenience involved, is felt to be uneconomic and unnecessary.

c. Economic pressures to join Sangkum, which ipso facto involves substantial financial contribution to sponsors.

d. Dictatorial methods of Prince, [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*].

e. His favoritism and penchant play off one against another.

f. Widespread corruption within government, including venality police.

g. Increasing lack of employment opportunities which young [*high?*] school and college graduates feel commensurate with their education status.

h. Reliance on elder statesmen such as Penn Nouth, Nhiek Tioulong and Son Sann who allegedly tainted by service under French. However, this complaint is largely confined to young intellectuals who themselves ambitious for power.

i. Wastage foreign exchange on Sihanouk's junkets abroad.

6. Generally speaking, foreign affairs not issue. Neutrality policy has almost universal support. Concern that Sihanouk may carry Cambodia too far to left presently limited to court, small but influential group entrepreneurs, landowners and rice millers, and few deputies. On other hand, there is widespread feeling of smug satisfaction at France's [*Prince's*] astuteness playing East and West against each other and thereby obtaining aid from both. Likewise he not felt to blame for recurring troubles with Thailand and Vietnam, but rather that Cambodians innocent and injured party.

7. Atmosphere fear which dates from Bangkok plots and Dap Chhuon affair has become intensified since August 31 bombing attempt. Paradoxically this has been nourished not so much by growth opposition as by Sihanouk's obvious preoccupation with security of self and Royal Family. This, like criticism, is urban phenomenon and to large extent concentrated in Phnom Penh. Increasing authoritarianism and reliance on police and army has led to perceptible uneasiness. Where we have been able penetrate discretion based on fear, growing dissatisfaction found because of inability to express opinions without endangering one's life or livelihood. Although potential importance such unhappiness with exisiting situation cannot be under-estimated, no present indications any ability convert it into political force.

8. Essential gap in possibility for organizing opposition is absence of leaders who command significant support among urban element or population at large. Free Khmer movement has no broad backing. Sam Sary is completely discredited. Son Ngoc Thanh has lost most popular appeal he possessed during independence movement. Former democrats, although not particularly happy with their lot, are disorganized

and ineffective. Nhiek Tioulong lacks following and, further, has made number political enemies. Conceivable he might seek subvert Lon Nol who close friend and political ally, but highly doubtful whether latter would go along unless he loses favor with Prince and, in any case, most unlikely Lon Nol could carry army. Penn Nouth has many friends in upper echelons of government and understood to have been secretly nursing grievance against Sihanouk for years. However, he believed too old and ill to assume active opposition role. Son Sann [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] like Tioulong, has many enemies. Monireth, Sihanouk's uncle and who in theory probably best qualified to rally support against him, has made it clear he possesses no political or dynastic ambitions and, furthermore, has drawn closer to Queen and Palace since bombing incident. Younger politicians largely Sihanouk's creatures and, moreover, lack prestige and popular appeal.

9. Our conclusions are (a) discontent, although still discreet, is more outspoken than 12 months ago and will probably continue to grow, but doubtful whether in next year or so this will reach proportions which could seriously endanger Sihanouk. Also, thanks to army and police, his control of situation probably stronger today than year ago. (b) Internecine struggles in government for power and Sihanouk's favor will continue, but this cannot be equated with opposition to him. (c) Possibility organizing successful revolt seems remote at present. Therefore should Sihanouk's enemies seek to remove him, assassination seems the only recourse presently available.

Trimble

130. Memorandum From the Officer in Charge of Cambodian Affairs (Askew) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson)[1]

Washington, January 8, 1960.

SUBJECT

Thai-Cambodian Relations

Embassy Bangkok's reply (Bangkok's 1801)[2] to our suggestion (Deptel 1649 to Bangkok)[3] for a full scale démarche to the Thai on Sihanouk appears rather effectively to quash the idea for the time being. In effect, Bangkok believes we've put the cart before the horse; that before we can invoke Thai cooperation we must be able to prove there has been a definite improvement in Cambodia. My view is that such an improvement could most effectively be brought about by Thai (and Vietnamese) cooperation in a constructive, albeit admittedly distasteful, approach to the Sihanouk problem. In fact, I think it highly likely that Sihanouk would even try to hide marked evidences of "improvement" in his attitude (i.e. recognition of Communist menace and desire to hold it at bay), at least until he is much more confident of understanding and protection at the hands of the West.

In casting about for other possible lines of attack on the general problem, the Preah Vihear temple case, of course, comes to mind. Taking into account the treatment of this item in the "Dalat communiqué" (Saigon's 1934, paras 10 and 11),[4] we might give consideration to encouraging Son Sann to return Thanat's visit to Phnom Penh last summer. Such a return visit would be more effective if it were accompanied by some headway on an outstanding issue. A negotiated interim solution of the temple case might still have a chance of success, e.g., an "interim" agreement for joint administration, explicit reservation by both of their claims to sovereignty, and suspension of proceedings at the International Court "pending further bilateral negotiations". I have asked Carl Salans to look into the legal aspects and if no

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, Thailand–Cambodia Relations, 16.4, 1959–60. Secret. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Swezey, and sent through Usher.

[2] Dated January 6. (*Ibid.*, 651H.92/1–660)

[3] See footnote 2, *supra.*

[4] Document 127.

obstacles are encountered, shall recommend proposing the idea to the field.[5]

[5] The following notes by Usher appear on the source text at this point: "Note: Tel. from Phnom Penh Sunday reports that Trimble has suggested this return visit to Son Sann, who seemed receptive to the idea. R.E.U." and "We may want to let Trimble pursue this matter a little further and see what he gets out of it before going out with more detailed instructions. R.E.U." Anderson gave his approval.

131. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, January 12, 1960—2:20 p.m.

1735. Bangkok's 1801[2] and Phnom Penh's 847.[3] Defer Embassy Bangkok's judgment on futility general approach to RTG in absence convincing demonstration improvement in Cambodia. Unfortunately any such marked improvement beyond evidences already summarized Deptel 1649 to Bangkok[4] and Phnom Penh's 824[5] may be slow in developing unless tensions with neighbors relaxed.

Department however still disturbed over possibility Sarit's opinions [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] may revive Thai interest in actively supporting opposition elements Cambodia. Therefore suggest Embassy Bangkok take next appropriate opportunity advise RTG that on basis recent careful assessment political situation Cambodia we conclude Sihanouk now in even stronger position than recent past, he enjoys support all major sources and instruments power in Cambodia and that what dissatisfaction exists is muted, disorganized, not directed at his foreign policy and represents no appreciable threat to his position. Detailed treatment these points in

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/1–1260. Secret. Drafted by Askew, cleared by SEA, and approved by Steeves. Also sent to Phnom Penh and repeated to Saigon.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[3] Document 129.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 129.

[5] In telegram 824, December 24, Ambassador Johnson reported that Foreign Minister Thanat had raised the possibility of U.S.-Thai consultations on what Thanat considered to be the deterioration of the situation in Cambodia. (Department of State, Central Files, 851H.05193/12–2459)

Phnom Penh's 847 may be used as desirable to support presentation. This suggestion subject Phnom Penh's concurrence and any cautions it may wish recommend.

Merchant

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132. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Usher) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Steeves)[1]

Washington, March 11, 1960.

SUBJECT

Year-End Assessment of US-Cambodian Relations

The attached despatch from Phnom Penh[2] very admirably analyzes major political developments in Cambodia during 1959 in the context of their effect on the position of the United States in that country. It is noted that 1959 was "a Year of Troubles" with severe strains on Cambodian relations with the US, Thailand, and Viet-Nam. Nevertheless, at year's end, the situation was in most respects better than was to have been expected in the light of earlier experience. Of particular significance was the absence, despite what could be interpreted as ample provocation, of any further substantial move toward the Sino-Soviet bloc. Instead, Sihanouk showed signs of seeking protection against real or fancied free world pressures in closer ties with other neutrals. This is the main significance the Embassy attaches to Sihanouk's trip to the UAR, Yugoslavia and India in late 1959. The Embassy also believes that this tack, while admittedly second best, is vastly preferable to the former practice of scurrying to the bloc. In this connection, Sihanouk may now realize that he cannot make many more moves toward the bloc without seriously compromising Cambodia's neutrality.

The Embassy finds ample confirmation throughout 1959 of the thesis that US relations with Cambodia are determined in large measure by the state of Cambodia's relations with Thailand and Viet-Nam. US-Cambodian relations reached a low point in March 1959 owing to

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 1–A.2 Briefing Papers. Secret. Drafted by Askew.

[2] Despatch 255 from Saigon, February 12, not attached. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 611.51H/2–1260)

Cambodian conviction of Thai and Vietnamese support for the dissident plots and owing also to suspicions of US complicity. Mr. Parsons' visit in April marked the turning point following which the relationship moved to a peak of cordiality during Secretary Seaton's visit to inaugurate the Port Highway. The situation again deteriorated in September with publication of Slat Peau's testimony incriminating US Embassy Attaché Matsui. The Embassy noted that the importance of this development in shaking Cambodian confidence in US motives cannot be overemphasized.

The fact that we were not worse off at the end of the year is attributed in large part to the active steps taken by the US to restrain Thailand and Viet-Nam. The Embassy therefore recommends that we pursue this more active and positive policy unrelentingly, while exercising patience toward the Cambodians. Our position vis-à-vis the RKG is seen as having an important educative element which implies the need for occasional "disciplinary measures".

The report also analyzes Sihanouk's position and evolving orientation. It finds some internal opposition, which, however, is leaderless, unorganized and not based on any serious disagreement with Sihanouk's neutrality policy. Sihanouk meanwhile has emerged with even greater authority and with all major sources of power firmly in his control.

SEA Comment. We believe this despatch to be an excellent analysis, particularly outstanding for objectivity and concentration on the really significant facets of the situation. We concur generally in the Embassy's recommendations, provided the "educative role" be taken to imply above all dignity, respectability and trustworthiness. One point to which the Embassy might have given somewhat more attention is the importance of US friendship to Cambodia.

133. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Cambodia[1]

Washington, April 24, 1960—3:26 p.m.

931. Your 1357[2] and 1365.[3]

1. Concur your concern over Chou En-lai visit. Believe possibly one means minimizing substantive Commie gains would be bolster Sihanouk's confidence in understanding and support of free world, specifically US. Conceivably some headway might be made in this direction by covering substance following points in your forthcoming conversation with Sihanouk:

a) Reiterate sympathy for sorrowful burden King's death and understanding of trying problems this must have caused. Refer reiteration US friendship and best wishes expressed by Parsons. (Deptel 900)[4]

b) Express understanding that view current circumstances and Sihanouk's long period uninterrupted active leadership of government, he would feel need for period of rest. Note however his leadership obviously desired by people Cambodia particularly at present juncture and express your hope also that he will soon find it possible again take reins of government.

c) Express regret emphasis placed by some elements, apparently with deliberate intent, on alleged conflict of interest between Cambodia and US, whereas in fact none exists. Exploitation this fiction unfortunately appears have eroded somewhat confidence existing between our two countries. Acknowledge it perhaps natural for some people to draw inferences from close association between US and Cambodia's two neighbors on specific aspects of international affairs. However, effect of this association on US attitude toward Cambodia has been greatly and falsely exaggerated. This association neither extends to all

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 033.9351H/4–2460. Secret. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Anderson and Usher, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1357, April 22, the Embassy suggested that Chou En-lai's upcoming trip to Phnom Penh, May 5–9, might have as its objective a treaty of friendship and nonaggression between Cambodia and China as well as more Chinese aid for Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, 033.9351H/4–2160)

[3] In telegram 1365, April 22, Trimble asked for instruction and guidance for an informal talk he proposed to have with Sihanouk in light of Chou En-lai's upcoming visit and the Cambodian-Vietnamese dispute over the disputed islands in the Gulf of Siam. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/4–2260)

[4] Parsons' best wishes were offered in a discussion with Nong Kimny, April 14, in Washington, the gist of which was reported to the Embassy in telegram 900 to Phnom Penh, April 14. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/4–1460)

phases international relations nor, specifically, does it in any way affect basic principles US foreign policy, including traditional respect for rights of others and adherence to principle of peaceful settlement disputes in spirit international law and UN Charter. Furthermore, it by no means implies that US supports position these neighbors in their differences with Cambodia. Bases these differences, as graphically illustrated by Sihanouk himself at Kep (your 1365), antecede by centuries establishment US relations with the countries concerned. We believe any fair-minded person recognizes that US, a relative newcomer to scene, cannot and should not assume responsibility for every aspect such complex and long established problems and the deep sentiments they understandably have nurtured in parties concerned. Nevertheless, as often expressed by US at highest levels, US does view manifestations these differences with deep and active concern; has consistently exerted best efforts to help maintain and improve relations between Cambodia and neighbors; and in particular is alert to see that no aspect of a country's relationship with US be misused to settle old differences.

d) In this context, US sought understanding of GVN position on recently erupted Gulf islands dispute and passed this information to RKG (Deptel 900 and and your 1350).[5] Here again, once US assured neither party intends resort to force or other non-peaceable measures, scope of US action necessarily circumscribed. Would appear to us that view long-standing nature this dispute and apparent absence any promising basis for immediate resolution such complex problem, both countries might find it in their interests maintain status quo for the moment, leaving further discussion problem for more propitious moment. If our interpretation correct, believe this is in effect Cambodia's basic attitude toward boundary delimitation problems.

e) Note our reassurance over Cambodian record settling disputes in peaceful manner. Cambodian actions and abilities in this sphere, notably demonstrated at Geneva 1954, with French during earlier negotiations for independence, and in ICJ, have evoked admiration for Cambodian statesmanship. If eventually Cambodia believes time ripe for raising issue, suggest that should bilateral discussion not offer promise, RKG again explore possibilities some form international mediation, e.g. Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, of which Cambodia a contracting party, or possibly a UN mediator.

f) Finally you may wish to reiterate basic US good will toward Cambodia and understanding RKG's foreign policy inviting Sihanouk disregard what some people say and rather judge US on basis verifia-

[5] Dated April 19. (*Ibid.*, 751H.13/4–1960) The islands were held by Cambodian forces, but had recently been visited by South Vietnamese naval vessels to bolster Vietnam's claim to them.

ble public record of consistent and unwavering support for RKG even at moments in which US motives publicly questioned in Cambodia. Trust statesman of Sihanouk's stature and experience understands that US fidelity to basic principles of international justice (which foundation US policy toward Cambodia as well as other countries) is absolutely essential if US is to fulfill its heavy world-wide responsibilities. Even risk of serious disagreements with closest US allies has not deterred continued adherence these principles. Since US has explicitly eschewed resort to force (unless attacked) or subversion, its relations with other countries cannot be based on threats or coercion but rather on mutual confidence. US wishes therefore see this confidence reinforced in relations with Cambodia.

Herter

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134. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, May 7, 1960—5:39 p.m.

2933. Although Department agrees with Saigon's 3095[2] that démarche to Diem should be supported in Thailand special approach to Thais would not appear profitable at this time. Although Thais certainly not blameless nor unprovocative in their dealings with Cambodia they have been more responsive than GVN to our recent efforts at reducing tensions. Furthermore, upcoming SEATO conference, King's visit plus Thai irritation over rice deals with India make inappropriate hit Thais hard on anything right now. Therefore suggest you take earliest opportunity in course conduct other business to mention to Sarit or Prapat our serious view of GVN provocations of Cambodia, e.g. support Khmer dissidents, actions in Gulf island dispute, etc. Without going into details and if you deem appropriate you may lend emphasis to your remarks by informing Thais we considering taking "strong actions" to persuade GVN abandon its dangerous game. If

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751K.00/5–260. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Charles T. Cross, cleared by SEA and FE, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] For text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1958–1960, vol. I, pp. 433–437.

Thais and GVN collaborating on Cambodia this approach would provide Thais with adequate notice that its partner in trouble with United States Government on this issue.

Herter

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135. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, May 13, 1960.

SUBJECT

Ambassador Trimble's Assessment of Chou's Visit to Cambodia

Ambassador Trimble's report on the outcome of Chou En-lai's visit to Cambodia (Phnom Penh's 1461 at Tab A)[2] parallels in many respects the observations in my earlier memorandum on this subject (Tab B),[3] and it points up some disturbing prospects.

The Ambassador notes the absence of a formal joint agreement calling for ChiCom help in the event of aggression against Cambodia, and attributes avoidance of such an agreement to his frank talk with Sihanouk on May 2 (Tab C)[4] and supporting démarches by the French Ambassador. Nevertheless, Ambassador Trimble believes Chou's various unilateral statements on ChiCom support for Cambodia "in effect extended ChiCom influence deep into Southeast Asia." The Ambassador concludes that the Cambodians do not consider the CPR a danger to Cambodia and that Cambodia is turning from India to the CPR as the "focus [of][5] its external orientation." It remains to be seen, in the Ambassador's opinion, whether Cambodia's foreign policy will now "lean left sufficiently to raise [a] question [as to] whether it can be

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 16.2.1 Chou Visit to Cambodia, May 5–9. Secret. Drafted by Askew, cleared by Cleveland, and sent through Steeves.

[2] Not attached. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 033.9351H/5–1260)

[3] In this memorandum, May 10, Anderson concluded that the Chou En-lai visit to Cambodia, May 5–9, indicated no change in Cambodia's policy of neutrality. Anderson noted that Chou had pledged support for Cambodian independence vis-à-vis its neighbors and condemned "imperialists" for their subversion of Cambodia. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Reported in telegram 1409 from Phnom Penh, May 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/5–360; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] All brackets are in the source text.

called neutrality at all." The determining factor, he again notes, will be the manner in which Viet-Nam and Thailand handle their differences with Cambodia.

SEA Comments

The Chou En-lai visit serves to underline Sihanouk's oft-repeated preference for closer accommodation with the bloc over absorption by his pro-West neighbors. In recent statements Sihanouk admitted that acceptance of substantive Communist protection would be at the sacrifice of some Cambodian institutions and of some measure of Cambodian independence, but asserted that it would at least permit survival of Cambodia's national identity (Tab C). It would now appear only prudent to take these assertions at face value in our assessment of Cambodia's position.

Nevertheless, a residual, intuitive pro-West orientation probably continues to exist, and Sihanouk undoubtedly would prefer for Cambodia to remain genuinely neutral and genuinely independent. These factors, I believe, still constitute a basis—now admittedly narrowed—for the exercise of constructive free world influence on Cambodia. The road is still open for rebuilding Cambodian confidence in effective US and free world support for the Kingdom's independence and integrity. However, unless we can advance on this road, the prospects are for a continued deterioration in the situation leading to a serious crisis, possibly involving major Vietnamese and Thai intervention. The outcome of the present trend, if unchecked, can now only be regarded as potentially far worse than the existence of a neutral, independent—albeit troublesome—Cambodia.

As Ambassador Trimble has again indicated, Viet-Nam and Thailand constitute the key to the situation. It would appear that we have no real choice but to persist in our present policy of containing Vietnamese and Thai antagonism toward Cambodia, and must with some urgency continue to seek means to make this policy substantially more effective—if possible, prior to Sihanouk's proposed visit to Communist China later this year.

The imminent return of Ambassadors Trimble and Johnson on consultation offers an opportunity for reviewing the problem with them at a particularly opportune moment.

136. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, June 1, 1960.

SUBJECT

Sihanouk's "Open Letter"[2] and Subsequent Developments

Sihanouk's Accusations

Embassy Phnom Penh has termed (Tab A) Sihanouk's public rebuttal (Tab B) to Ambassador Trimble's letter (Tab C) a "vicious attack on the Ambassador".[3] It suggests the Department may care either to publish the Ambassador's letter or plant a question in the Secretary's next press conference to permit expression of regret over Sihanouk's evident misunderstanding and reiteration of US policy toward Cambodia.

Since Sihanouk denied—albeit perhaps dishonestly—that his "Open Letter" had been aimed at President Eisenhower, the US Government, US Ambassadors, the US people or the US nation, I believe you may wish to review the proposal to raise the matter with Ambassador Nong Kimny. I suggest we take no additional action on Sihanouk's accusations for the time being. Under present conditions any further move on our part is apt not to produce constructive results and is more likely to add fuel to the fire.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 1–A.2 Briefing Papers, 1959–60. Confidential. Drafted by Askew and cleared by Usher and Elizabeth Jorzick of EA/P. Tabs A–D were not attached, but see footnote 3 below.

[2] In the May 21 issue of *Neat Chiet Niyum*, Sihanouk criticized the "imperialist milieux," a clear reference to the United States, for misrepresenting Cambodia's government as undemocratic and comparing it to other authoritarian governments in Asia. The specific incident which occasioned Sihanouk's charges was an article by Tillman Durdin in *The New York Times*, May 1, but Sihanouk expanded his charges in the letter to complain of general distortion about Cambodia in the U.S. press and in scholarly writing. The text of Sihanouk's letter is in telegram 1495 from Phnom Penh, May 23. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/5–2306; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Ambassador Trimble protested Sihanouk's accusations in a May 23 letter in which he also reported to Sihanouk that he was returning to Washington for consultations. The text of Trimble's letter (Tab C) is in telegram 1499 from Phnom Penh, May 24. On May 28, Sihanouk publicly rebutted Trimble's letter in an editorial in *Neat Chiet Niyum*, the text of which is in telegram 1521 from Phnom Penh, May 30 (Tab B). In telegram 1524 from Phnom Penh (Tab A), the Embassy in Phnom Penh commented on Sihanouk's rebuttal. (Telegrams in Department of State, Central Files, 123–Trimble, William C; all included in the microfiche supplement)

Threat to Refuse US Aid

Embassy Phnom Penh also comments (Tab A) that as illogical as it may seem, it is conceivable that Sihanouk's outburst may lead the RKG to request termination of US aid. Unquestionably such a move would entail most serious consequences for the US position in the area and should be avoided if possible. However, the threat probably arises mainly from Sihanouk's present disturbed mood and does not as yet represent either Sihanouk's, or the RKG's, considered position.

Similarly on this score, I perceive no clear advantage in action on our part at the present moment. However, a public restatement of US policy toward Cambodia may be desirable if a suitable occasion for such a statement arises.

Outlook

Unfortunately, we cannot confidently expect this problem to blow over soon. *The New York Times* carried another uncomplimentary article on Cambodia by Tillman Durdin last Sunday[4] (Tab D). The referendum on June 5 to demonstrate Sihanouk's popularity will continue to evoke further public statements from him undoubtedly including comments on international affairs. Finally, the giant Soviet aid hospital is due to be inaugurated some time this month with the rumored participation of a prominent Soviet figure. The first prospect of relief is Sihanouk's visit to France which is scheduled to begin the latter part of June.[5]

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[4] May 29.

[5] The following handwritten notes appear on the source text. The first, by Parsons, reads: "Please take first opportunity to discuss with Amb. Trimble. For the moment at least I agree no further action. J.G.P." The second, by Askew, reads: "Whole subject U.S. reaction to Sihanouk under continuing discussion with Amb. Trimble. No firm conclusions to date. However, Amb. did approve draft cable to P Penh 6/2 incorporating gist this memo. L.B.A." The draft cable was sent as telegram 1056 to Phnom Penh, June 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/6–260)

137. Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Steeves) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, June 18, 1960.

SUBJECT

Recent Developments in Cambodia

Prince Sihanouk's public attacks on Viet-Nam, Thailand and US "imperialist milieux" for allegedly attempting to encircle neutral Cambodia have mounted to a level of bitterness, unusual even in comparison with periodic Cambodian tactics of this nature in the past. Although he has specified publicly, in response to a letter from our Ambassador, that he did not intend to indict the President, Government or people of the US,[2] he has left no doubt of his resentment of US aid to Cambodia's anti-Communist neighbors and his critical views on US policies in Asia. These outbursts have followed the Chou En-lai visit to Cambodia in May and Viet-Nam's earlier abrupt reiteration of claims to several small islands off the Cambodian coast. While flaying certain free world nations, Sihanouk has described Communist China as a sincere friend. Recent British and French intelligence reports note the possibility that Cambodia may break with the United States and accept renewed Communist offers of military aid, including jet aircraft.

Internal Crisis

Sihanouk's emotionalism in the international sphere has coincided with mounting internal strains over the question of succession to the Throne.[3] This crisis, which entailed serious opposition to Sihanouk from members of his family and other influential palace circles, appears now to have culminated in steps to have Sihanouk assume supreme formal leadership. The Regency Council, appointed following the King's death in April, has resigned and the Constitution has been amended to provide for the appointment of a "Chief of State", presumably with implied powers to "rule" as well as "reign". Following demonstrations and official petitions, Sihanouk, whose popularity with the masses was overwhelmingly ratified in the June 5 popular

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–1860. Secret. Drafted by Askew and cleared in draft by Cleveland, Anderson, and Sidney Sober.

[2] See footnote 3, *supra*.

[3] Reported in telegram 1626 from Phnom Penh, June 16. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

referendum, is scheduled to accede to this office June 20. The move does not necessarily imply the end of the monarchy or of parliamentary government, at least in form.

Western Proposals

The French have informed us that they intend to warn Sihanouk of the dangers in his current anti-free world tendencies when he visits France for medical treatment, presumably in the near future. The British have discussed with us a proposed personal message from Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sihanouk by which they would hope to reassure him of free world support and check any further moves toward the bloc. They have suggested we convey similar expressions of our friendship for Sihanouk.

We are inclined to believe that in Sihanouk's present emotional state, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] he would continue to ignore any but the most extravagant US praise and assurances, which in turn would carry at this juncture unfortunate implications in the face of his immoderate criticism of the US. Nevertheless, we are seeking an opportunity effectively to bolster his confidence in the US. Sihanouk's reassertion of his domestic political power as the new "Chief of State", a recently reported reconciliation with his family, and his forthcoming rest cure in France may serve to calm his emotional agitation.

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138. Memorandum From the Director of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, June 21, 1960.

SUBJECT

Intelligence Note: Request for US Military Jets Reflects Cambodia's Brand of Neutralism

The pending request by Cambodia to the United States for eight jet fighters[2] has important political connotations. The recent strengthening of ties between Phnom Penh and Peiping is connected with

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 2-E-Bloc Military Aid, 1960. Secret. Drafted by Sober.

[2] The request was reported and analyzed in telegram 1619 from Phnom Penh, oth June 15. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.5622/6-1560; included in the microfiche supplement)

Prince Sihanouk's doubts that, in a showdown, the United States would effectively protect him against Thailand and South Vietnam. Strains have developed in Cambodia's policy to date of relying on the United States to subsidize all pay and allowances and all imported end-items for the Cambodian military forces and to refuse military assistance from Communist China. Although Sihanouk's actions are sometimes irrational and unpredictable, the US response to the recent approach on jet aircraft will probably be an important factor in determining Cambodia's future policy on military aid. But aside from the question of jets, in time Cambodia may accept at least some token military support from Peiping.

The addition of jets to his air force is important to Sihanouk as a matter of prestige. (A few jets would not basically alter the balance of military power between Cambodia on one hand and the superior forces of Thailand and/or South Vietnam on the other, even though South Vietnam has no jet aircraft as a result of the Indochina armistice restrictions.) Sihanouk would also view the receipt of jets from the United States as an indication of Washington's sincerity in its protestations of support for Sihanouk. And although Sihanouk's doubts in this regard would probably not be permanently erased, he and his military commanders would presumably prefer to have jets from the United States rather than from Communist China because of their desire not to risk a withdrawal of US military aid as well as their recognition of the danger of Communist penetration.

On the other hand, Sihanouk might consider that he had little choice but to turn to Communist China for jets if he were turned down by the United States. ([*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] reports, which are unconfirmed, state that during his visit to Phnom Penh in May 1960, Chou En-lai promised to supply jets to Cambodia.) Sihanouk might then desire to parade some tangible evidence of Peiping's military backing in the hope it might result in the United States' applying greater pressure on Saigon and Bangkok to desist from political as well as military adventures against Phnom Penh. If he accepted military aid from Peiping, Sihanouk would be inclined to defend his action in terms of Cambodia's neutralist policy: Cambodia has for some time received aid for economic purposes from both East and West, and it is proper that it do the same in the military sphere. If he came to such a decision, Sihanouk would probably hope that the United States (following the example in Indonesia, for instance) would not cut off its military aid. Regardless of what happens with respect to the jets, unless Cambodia's relations with Thailand and South Vietnam improve substantially Sihanouk will continue to be tempted to seek some military support from Communist China—end-items, train-

ing or even a mutual-support agreement. The temptation would be appreciably lessened, at least for the time being, if Cambodia obtained jets from the United States.

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139. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, June 21, 1960—9 p.m.

1659. Deptel 1111.[2] Since Chou visit diplomatic community has been particularly sensitive to any indications or developments which might tend to confirm deep-seated suspicion that Sihanouk contemplates some early move towards further accommodation with bloc and ChiComs in particular.

Following developments may be cited in support these growing suspicions:

(1) Sihanouk then invited Australian Ambassador to accompany him on six day trip up-country just prior Chou visit reported by Ambassador as being in very relaxed frame of mind at that time and giving every evidence of his confidence his ability cope with Chou visit. Since visit, however, Sihanouk has been in very disturbed state of mind which suggests that he may be deeply troubled by something that transpired about time of visit.

(2) Known irritation of Sihanouk with neighbors, particularly GVN, heightened by latter's reiterated claim to islands and apparent encouragement of dissident activities. This had just reached climax with Foreign Office circular note to diplomatic missions stating that any attack or incursion in force by Cambodian rebels from soil of neighbors would be considered act of aggression that country against Cambodia. (Embtel 1656)[3]

(3) Persistent and exaggerated nature of Sihanouk's diatribes against free world and in particular US during past few weeks which could be interpreted as effort to create atmosphere in which some further move towards ChiComs would be justified.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–2160. Confidential; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Vientiane, London, Paris, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1111, June 11, the Department requested the Embassy's comments on reports that unless the United States increased military and police aid to Cambodia, the Cambodian Armed Forces and police would be armed by another power. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5-MSP/6–1760)

[3] The text of the confidential circular note from the Cambodian Foreign Ministry, June 20, with unnecessary words deleted, is in telegram 1656 from Phnom Penh, June 21. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/6–2160)

(4) Intelligence reports in which [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] appear place considerable credence that some kind of military agreement between RKG and ChiComs has been prepared, only awaiting signature.

(5) Reports circulating in intelligence community re bloc offer of jet aircraft and RKG purchase of Czech arms.

(6) Recent information received through [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] indicating that unless US increases rate of military and police aid RKG will proceed implement plan to turn over arms furnished to FARK and police by US to forces vives and newly created commando units of KSRK, FARK and police sources to be rearmed with weapons including jet aircraft supplied by unnamed power.

These disquieting indicators and general subject RKG–ChiCom relations under almost daily discussion between British, French, Australian and US Embassies and somewhat less frequent discussion with Indian and Japanese Ambassadors. Embassy feels sense of uneasiness but unable satisfactorily identify motivation which would lead Sihanouk to sacrifice the limited field of maneuverability that still remains to him by a move towards the bloc of a drastic enough nature that would lead US, for example, to withdraw military assistance which they assume likely consequence of RKG–ChiCom military assistance agreement (as distinct from arms purchase from Czechs). All admit that RTG or GVN could be responsible for incident which might goad a wrought-up Sihanouk to react by concluding military agreement of some kind with ChiComs. All can appreciate that Chou may have made considerable headway in convincing Sihanouk that future of this part of the world will largely be determined by ChiComs and that engineering the withdrawal of US from Cambodia, particularly in military field, would be appealing to Chou. This does not satisfactorily explain however what Sihanouk believes he has to gain through a step that would probably eliminate principal counterpoise to bloc.

One explanation of Sihanouk's recent behavior that is perhaps more logical but still not satisfying is possibility that Sihanouk may believe that attacking West places him in position solicit greater amounts ChiCom economic aid on occasion his visit Peiping which some circles believe may take place as early as fall. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]

With Sihanouk's decision become Chief of State certain attitude of relief has been detected among Cambodians. In conversation June 17, Foreign Minister Tep Phan (Embtel 1640)[4] indicated that with succession problem resolved no reason why Sihanouk should not depart on long postponed trip to France. Other Cambodians have also reflected similar attitude, which if valid, suggests that succession may have

[4] Dated June 19. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/6–1960)

been largely to blame for Sihanouk's recent disturbed state of mind and that he not likely to depart for France if some dramatic shift in RKG policy about to take place.

Embassy would not be surprised, however, if Nhiek Tioulong, during present visit Czechoslovakia (Embtel 1607)[5] concludes some agreement under which RKG would purchase or would obtain from Czechs quantity of small arms for KSRK (as suggested some intelligence reports). Purchase deal (which anti-Communist Tioulong might promote if sufficient personal financial incentive present) would probably be welcomed by bloc as first step in penetration of Cambodian military forces. Moreover, Cambodians would probably calculate that in view nature of arms and precipient [*sic*] US would be unlikely withdraw military assistance to FARK. Jet aircraft offer by bloc should also not be ruled out (Embtel 1619).[6]

Most disturbing new development is report mentioned item (6) above. Report itself leaves considerable doubt as to whether Cambodians contemplating using threat of bloc aid to increase amount and speed up deliveries US aid to military and police, or whether they seek build up justification for accepting bloc military aid offers.

To sum up. Evidence in support some significant move toward bloc very tenuous and few hard facts available. Intelligence reports disturbing but we continually impressed with how few foreigners as well as Cambodians really know what is going on with the result that speculation in many cases takes on the appearance of reality. We tend be less pessimistic than other diplomatic missions as to near-term future. Latter, however, readily admit absence of other than circumstantial evidence in support their fears and are as baffled as we with respect motivation. Situation is one requiring very close attention and we hopeful next several weeks will provide some clues as to future course Cambodian policy. Decision of Sihanouk re trip to France, content and intensity Cambodian attacks on West and US, and particularly statements by Sihanouk, and nature of any RKG initiative re US or bloc military or economic aid will be important factors.

But even if no change in RKG policy toward bloc now contemplated, must not be overlooked that untimely or ill-advised action by RTG or GVN may set in motion forces which may goad Sihanouk into moving in that direction. In this respect Sihanouk's conviction that Thai and Vietnamese support activities against him being stepped up is crucial element.

Moore

[5] Dated June 13. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/6–1660)
[6] See footnote 2, *supra*.

140. Memorandum From the Officer in Charge of Vietnam Affairs (Wood) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson)[1]

Washington, June 23, 1960.

SUBJECT

Jets for Cambodia

Since there is no military need, this appears to be one question which can be approached on its diplomatic merits.

While Cambodia may, in some ways, be a backward country, we should realize that in dealing with it diplomatically we face perhaps the world's most advanced and successful exponent of the art of Neutral Brinksmanship. No matter how excited and unpleasant he may be, we should treat him as though he knew just what he wanted and how to go about upsetting our Anglo-Saxon phlegm in order to get it. Like some wives who feel their husbands should let them get a new hat, he hits the emotional keyboard with unfailing accuracy. HRH Prince Norodom Sihanouk's record in obtaining aid from countries of every shade is proof. Yielding to vituperative blackmail may not be the best medicine. This time we should let him teeter over *his* brink at a time and place of his own choosing without losing *our* nerve.

While we will never know everything he wants, we do know that he wants jets which he evidently feels will somewhat repair his prestige and reinflate his ego after the embarrassing confusion of the succession and in the afterlight of some risky commitment which Chou may well have obtained.

If we give him jets after what he has said about us, he and the other leaders of SEA countries will think we must be soft fools indeed and it will be harder to deal seriously with all of them. The difficulties of resolving the several vitally important problems between ourselves and Viet-Nam will be dangerously increased.

Our policy should be not to give jets to Cambodia until we can give them to Viet-Nam. We should not explain this policy to Sihanouk, but we should explain it to Viet-Nam.

Sihanouk will respect us more (he cannot like us less) if we don't give him jets. If he asks us for jets, we should say we cannot supply them. We should ask if he intends to obtain them from the Soviet Bloc. If he indicates that he may, we should tell him that he has no military need for jets and that he should, as the peaceloving leader of a neutral nation, think carefully of the fact that if he accepts jets from the

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 16.8 South Vietnam–Cambodia May–Dec 1960. Secret. Drafted by Wood.

Communists he will be personally responsible for increasing tensions in the area without, in any real sense, increasing his ability to defend himself. We should emphasize that without our influence his position vis-à-vis his neighbors would be far more dangerous than it is and that if he accepts Communist jets, we will find it difficult to continue to exert a moderating influence on his neighbors. This message should be delivered in writing with the full realization that he will want to publish it abroad in distorted form and with the understanding, conveyed to him orally, that if he does publicize it, we will reply publicly.

If we bend too far to assuage Sihanouk, our posture will be undignified and he will only be tempted to take further advantage of us.

Since he may accept Soviet jets, we should make a greater effort than we have to coordinate our military program with that of the French in order to strengthen the allied position and to make a better demonstration of Free World effectiveness in military training. We should not withdraw our military program if he does accept Bloc jets, but should demonstrate that our military aid is less dangerous to his sovereignty than that from the Soviets. We have had considerable success in this in Indonesia. We should not assume that the acceptance of Soviet jets means the loss of Cambodia.

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141. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, June 24, 1960—10:06 p.m.

3136. Phnom Penh's 1656 being repeated Canberra by Department.[2] For Bangkok and Saigon.

Suggest you approach host government soonest along following lines, unless you perceive objection:

a. US believes RKG's confidential circular reported reftel warrants serious consideration all interested governments, irrespective whether accusations therein well-founded, particularly view diplomatic nature approach in lieu usual publicized charges. Failure of RTG and GVN to respond with positive assurance, or possible occurrence minor border incident, might be taken by RKG as excuse invoke formal expression

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–2260. Confidential; Priority. Drafted by Askew; cleared by SEA, BNA, WE, and SPA; and approved by Steeves. Also sent priority to Saigon and Vientiane and repeated priority to Phnom Penh and to Paris, London, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 3, Document 139.

ChiCom protection, e.g. military assistance or border guarantee pact. US regards situation Cambodia as extremely delicate and meriting utmost care and discretion of all countries with stake in area to guard interests of free world in SEA.

b. We believe this represents opportunity for RTG (GVN) again officially to disassociate itself from any Cambodian rebel activity that may be taking place its territory.

c. Accordingly we urge RTG (GVN) reiterate to RKG in dignified and firm manner its disapproval any such activity directed against Cambodia and its readiness cooperate in suppression any illegal activity especially in sensitive border areas. This might be accompanied by renewed expression of opposition to any activities tending threaten peace, of wish to continue friendly relations with Cambodia and of readiness discuss in diplomatic channels any problems in such relations. RTG (GVN) may wish add it deplores position taken by RKG that such activity, which RTG (GVN) does not condone, should constitute aggression. Suggest you urge that despite admittedly offensive tone of RKG circular, RTG (GVN) reply not be used as vehicle engage in polemics which might provoke RKG further or detract from dignified tone of response.

d. US proposes inform RKG that US strongly disapproves of any rebel activity against RKG from foreign territories.

Subject your concurrence Department proposes inform UK, French, and Australian representatives Washington of foregoing US approaches and suggest their governments may wish make similar representations to Thai and Vietnamese. Advise soonest. See separate Deptel re proposed démarches to RKG.[3]

For Bangkok:

Believe discussion reported your 3528[4] constitutes appropriate prelude for démarche suggested above.

For Vientiane:

Believe RLG response to circular also would be desirable. Accordingly suggest your discretion you discuss subject with RLG noting we perceive considerable value in reassuring Cambodians and suggesting RLG might wish, while not acknowledging charges in circular applicable to Laos, reassure Cambodia of its good will and readiness take any necessary steps preclude use its territory for rebel activities.

Herter

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[3] In telegram 1147 to Phnom Penh, June 24, the Department instructed Moore to assure the Cambodian Foreign Minister "in most categoric terms of firm US opposition to any rebel activities directed against RKG from foreign countries." The United States was prepared to consult with Cambodia on the nature of such an alleged threat. Less formally, Moore was to express surprise that Cambodia felt endangered as the United States was unaware of any threat; furthermore, Moore should state that Cambodia's neighbors might consider the June 20 circular "offensive." (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–2260)

[4] In telegram 3528, June 23, the Chargé in Bangkok reported that he had discussed the Cambodian circular of June 20 with Acting Foreign Minister Boon Chafoenchai. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/6–2360)

142. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, June 30, 1960[1]

SUBJECT

The Situation in Cambodia

PARTICIPANTS

The Honorable Thanat Khoman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand
His Excellency Visutr Arthayukti, Ambassador of Thailand
The Honorable Christian A. Herter, Secretary of State
The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson, Ambassador to Thailand
Mr. Daniel V. Anderson, Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs

The Thai Foreign Minister called on the Secretary this afternoon for a fifteen minute interview which in fact lasted approximately forty minutes.

After an exchange of amenities Thanat said that he would like to discuss the situation in Cambodia. Thailand wanted to maintain good relations with Cambodia and had done its best to promote friendship between the two countries since the restoration of diplomatic relations in 1958. In fact, he had told Sihanouk that if the Prince found any substance to charges of dissident activity in Thailand, the Thai Government would take appropriate action. In practice, Cambodian charges had been make in general terms and almost entirely in the press and by radio.

Recently there had been "disturbing indications" that Cambodia might change its policy vis-à-vis the Chinese Communists. First of all there was the Chou visit and since then there had been many statements that were not reassuring. In fact, Thanat said he had gained the impression that, by attacking the Thais and the United States, Sihanouk might be seeking the role of victim of the "imperialists" in order to justify bringing in the Chinese Communists. He might even create an incident by arresting a group of men and claiming that they had "invaded" Cambodia. Thanat wondered what Sihanouk expected to gain.

Thanat observed that Cambodia considers certain parts of Thailand as belonging to the ancient Khmer empire and Sihanouk might have in the back of his mind the thought of recovering this empire and aligning himself with the Chinese Communists in order to do so.[2] As for Thailand, she had no desire whatsoever to recover any part of what is today Cambodia.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/6–3060. Secret. Drafted by Anderson. Foreign Minister Thanat visited Washington June 28–July 2, as a member of the party of the King and Queen of Thailand who were visiting the United States.

[2] Thanat's speculation that Cambodia may have designs on Thai territory is the first such statement we have noted from any Thai source. [Footnote in the source text.]

Recently, Thanat went on to say, our Chargé in Bangkok had cautioned the Thais to be calm and patient. Thanat said that his Government had, in fact, been both calm and patient but he was not at all sure, in view of the provocations from the Cambodians, that the Thais would remain silent indefinitely. Nevertheless, Thailand had decided to disregard Cambodia's attacks.

Thanat said it had occurred to him that Sihanouk's "whole game" might be exposed in the UN. In fact, he had recently talked with Secretary General Hammarskjold about the possibility of using the good offices of Mr. Zellweger, the UN representative in Laos.[3] Thanat said he would welcome a UN investigation and would be glad to show the UN representative everything there was to be seen in Thailand. Such a representative could ask Sihanouk what specifically was troubling Cambodia and could ask him to spell out his accusations. Thus any incipient coup could be exposed.

The Secretary said that we too were concerned over the situation which we hoped could be adjusted. The Secretary suggested that a UN representative might be useful and might even be able to assist in monitoring charges made by radio, as had been done with good effect in the Middle East.

In a discussion of possible UN intervention, Thanat said he understood that Zellweger was being succeeded by a French woman who also would have charge of UN technical assistance in Laos but who would not be a suitable representative to deal with the Cambodian case. Ambassador Johnson raised the possibility of another Beck-Friis mission but Thanat said Hammarskjold felt that Beck-Friis was "too stiff" and would not be suitable for this sort of job. There was a general discussion of the possible routes by which the Chinese Communists could be brought into Laos, e.g. covertly through the DRV and Laos via the "Ho Chi Minh Trail" and overtly by air or by sea via Sihanoukville.

In answer to Thanat's question about Sihanouk's travel plans, which included a visit to Peiping, the Secretary said that we had no precise information. However, it was pointed out that Sihanouk was expected to go to France and that we thought such a visit might be helpful since it usually resulted in improving both his health and his mood. We hoped the visit to France would precede that to Peiping.

In a discussion of Sihanouk's motivations, Mr. Anderson emphasized that the Prince no doubt felt he was surrounded by enemies plotting against his regime. There was some reason for such a feeling since there has in fact been plots against Sihanouk in which at least

[3] Thanat Khoman discussed this possibility with Hammarskjöld on July 5 and July 14. (Circular telegrams 44 and 79, July 9 and 14; Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/7–960 and 751H.00/7–1460, respectively)

one neighboring country had been involved; the Palace bomb plot had undoubtedly left its mark. We had the impression that Sihanouk also felt frustrated by the lack of interest shown by the outside world in the recent referendum. We therefore felt it important that countries of the free world which had received the recent Cambodian circular note should respond in a reassuring and helpful way. Such action would also show our support for the conduct of diplomatic relations through normal channels rather than by press and radio. We had in fact discussed this subject earlier today with British, French, and Australian representatives in Washington.

It was agreed that Thanat would seek an interview with the Secretary General on Tuesday in New York to sound out the possibilities of UN action and that Ambassador Johnson, who would be in New York that day, would get in touch with Thanat to learn the results of his interview.

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143. Editorial Note

On July 21, the National Security Council discussed U.S. policy in mainland Southeast Asia, including extensive consideration of Cambodia. The memorandum of discussion is printed as Document 64.

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144. Editorial Note

On August 15, Assistant White House Staff Secretary John S.D. Eisenhower prepared a "Synopsis of State and intelligence material reported to the President," which included the following report on Cambodia:

"Sihanouk has told Malcolm Macdonald of his essential pro-Western leanings. He plans to make a trip in the near future to Communist China where he claims he will make only inconsequential treaty of amity. He subtly threatens a treaty guaranteeing Cambodia's borders if he continues to have pressure from South Viet-Nam and Thailand." (Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries)

The information is taken from telegram 186 from Phnom Penh, August 14. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/8–1460; included in the microfiche supplement) The memorandum of the con-

versation between Malcolm Macdonald and Prince Sihanouk was transmitted in despatch 43 from Phnom Penh, August 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/8–1560)

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145. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, August 17, 1960.

SUBJECT

Contingency Exploration of Availability of Jets for Sale to Cambodia

The Cambodian Government is expected in the near future to present proposals for increased US military aid, possibly including jet training and jet aircraft. It is believed that we should begin exploring on a contingency basis the terms of a possible US position, since it appears likely that the Cambodians have, or in time will, become determined to obtain jets, and may be tempted to accept reported offers of jets from the Sino-Soviet bloc.

Background

In late June the Cambodians launched an intensified campaign of publicized complaints against the alleged hostile designs of their neighbors, Viet-Nam, Thailand and Laos. Citing the relatively large amounts of military aid given by the United States to these neighboring countries, the Cambodians publicly demanded that U.S. military aid to Cambodia be increased to insure Cambodia's defense capability against what they defined as threats to their national integrity. (Tab A)[2] We indicated to the Cambodian Government our readiness to consult on the nature and extent of the alleged threats and on means to counter them. (Tab B)[3] We also specifically affirmed our willingness to discuss with the appropriate Cambodian authorities the US military

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 16.14 Mid Year Crisis. Secret. Drafted by Askew on August 15 and cleared by SEA, S/P, U/MSC, and FE. None of the tabs was attached.

[2] Tab A is telegram 1687 from Phnom Penh, June 28, which contained the text of an editorial written by Sihanouk in *Neat Chiet Niyum*, June 25, complaining about U.S. military aid to Cambodia. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.5-MSP/6–2860)

[3] Tab B is telegram 1147 to Phnom Penh, June 24; see footnote 3, Document 141.

assistance program (Tab C),[4] and we expect presentation of the Cambodian proposals in the near future. (Tab D)[5]

Possible Cambodian Request for Jets and Jet Training

There is as yet no clear indication of what the Cambodian proposals will comprise; however, the Cambodians have manifested on various occasions an interest in jet aircraft and training (Tab E)[6] and there are indications that they have received offers of assistance in this field from the bloc. (Tab F)[7] Therefore, it is possible that the Cambodian proposals will include a request for some form of jet program.

While exclusion of Communist influence in the Cambodian armed forces has been a major objective of our military assistance program, we are reluctant to consider recommending the provision of jet aircraft by the US on a grant basis for the following reasons:

a) Absence of a military justification. Jets would not appreciably enhance Cambodia's capability for the type of military operations (mainly maintenance of internal security) our assistance program is intended to support.

b) Anticipated unfavorable reactions in Viet-Nam and Thailand. In Viet-Nam, it would undoubtedly increase pressure for equipping the Vietnamese air force with jets, which in turn would constitute a violation of the Geneva Agreements. In Thailand (and possibly elsewhere) it would probably be regarded as yielding to neutralist blackmail. (Tab G)[8]

NSC Directive

In approving the revised policy paper on Mainland Southeast Asia (NSC 6012)[9] on July 21, the National Security Council specified that "at such time as policy decisions are required as to whether jet aircraft should be provided to Cambodia or Viet-Nam, these questions should be referred to the National Security Council for consideration." (Tab H)[10]

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[4] Tab C is telegram 64 from Phnom Penh, July 14. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5-MSP/7-1460)

[5] Tab D is telegram 82 from Phnom Penh, July 19, which contained a note from Foreign Minister Tep Phan supporting Sihanouk's views in his editorial of June 25. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/7-1960)

[6] Tab E is telegram 1619 from Phnom Penh, June 15; see footnote 2, Document 138.

[7] Tab F is a memorandum of discussion between French Foreign Ministry officials and Assistant Secretary Parsons plus members of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, June 2. (Department of State, Central Files, 651H.93/6-260)

[8] Tab G is telegram 121 from Bangkok, July 22, in which the Embassy reported that the Thais were complaining that Cambodia received more military aid than Thailand on a per capita basis. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5-MSP/7-2260)

[9] Document 65.

[10] See Document 64.

Alternatives to Grant Jets from US

It is not inconceivable that the Cambodians may be willing, or could be persuaded, to acquire jet aircraft by purchase. In any event, it would possibly be very helpful to have in hand information on the availability of such aircraft for sale in other free world countries. (We already have a report (Tab I)[11] that Australia has surplus Vampires.) Furthermore, some free world country with special interests in the area, such as France, might be willing to supply jets on exceptionally favorable terms. Cambodia's acquisition of jets from a free world country other than the US would probably entail less serious repercussions than would provision of jets by the US. (Tab J)[12]

Information of this nature would be helpful for development of contingency plans and, particularly, for presentation of the problem to the NSC, should that become necessary.

Recommendation

That you approve approaches to the Australians, and, if subsequently found desirable, also to the British and French, along the following lines:

a) Whereas we are willing to consider Cambodian arms requests within the context of our current military assistance program, we are very reluctant to consider providing Cambodia with jet aircraft, owing in part to the risk of serious reactions in neighboring countries.

b) We believe such reactions might be less severe should Cambodia obtain jets from some free world country other than the US.

c) Therefore we would be interested in learning how far the Australian (British, French) would be willing to go toward meeting a possible Cambodian determination to obtain jet training and jets, either by purchase or grant.[13]

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[11] Tab I is telegram 26 from Canberra, July 27, in which the Embassy reported that the Royal Australian Air Force had 50 surplus Vampire jets in storage. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5622/7–2660)

[12] Tab J is CINCPAC telegram 052330Z, August 5; not further identified.

[13] A note on the source text indicates that Acting Secretary Dillon eliminated recommendation b) and revised c) to read: "Therefore we would be interested in learning Australian (British, French) views on meeting a possible Cambodian determination to obtain jet training and jets, either by purchase or grant." In a memorandum of August 26, Askew reported that Dillon approved discussions with the Australians, British, and French. (Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 1.14.2 Briefing Papers)

146. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, September 3, 1960—1 p.m.

270. CINCPAC for POLAD. Department pouch London and Paris.

1. Because of ceremonies incident to King's cremation and Soviet hospital inauguration, unable have interview with Sihanouk until September 2. He friendly and while nervous at start, gradually relaxed as conversation, which lasted for minute,[2] proceeded. Opened by expressing pleasure return Cambodia and privilege being present funeral services his father for whom I had great respect and affection. Sihanouk responded by welcoming me back and alluding to late King's warm regard for me. Continued that I had encountered great interest in Cambodia in Washington,[3] recognizing material progress made since independence, and understanding of its foreign policy. Reaffirmed desire USG assist Cambodia in maintaining its independence and national integrity and respect its neutrality policy.

2. Sihanouk replied he convinced sympathetic understanding of President. Regretted however misapprehensions in "certain great Western newspapers" re nature RKG neutrality, which they sought depict as one of oscillation and pro-East bias. This incorrect. RKG desires first and foremost maintain national independence and continue peaceful development of country. Believes this best attained by pursuing course strict neutrality with friendship for all. Facts are what count and progress country has made and its internal stability evidence that RKG on right course. He also fully aware that if Cambodia swung to left, it would lose independence.

3. I then gave Sihanouk President's letter, which he read with obvious pleasure as indicated by statement he would like immediately release it to press and also read message over radio.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/9-360. Confidential. Repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, CINCPAC, and Vientiane.

[2] As on the source text; obviously the conversation was longer than a minute.

[3] According to the President's Daily Appointment Book, Trimble met with Eisenhower on July 19 from 2:50 to 2:57 p.m. at Newport, Rhode Island. (Princeton University Library) No record of their conversation has been found, but a briefing memorandum of July 13, prepared in SEA, was sent to Eisenhower by Herter. (Department of State, Central Files, 611.51H/7-1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

At the Department of State's suggestion, a proposed letter from Eisenhower to Sihanouk was included with the July 13 memorandum for the President. In the letter, which was approved by the White House and pouched to the Embassy in Phnom Penh on August 3, Eisenhower expressed regret that he was unable to visit Cambodia during his midyear trip to the Far East. The President also assured Sihanouk that the United States respected Cambodia's decision to be neutral in foreign policy and congratulated Sihanouk on becoming Chief of State of Cambodia.

4. I next underscored our desire for good relations between Cambodia and neighbors and continuing efforts bring this about. I expressed satisfaction improvement which appears to have taken place in recent months and prospects further progress. Sihanouk agreed atmosphere better, mentioning forthcoming talks with RTG at UNGA designed to resolve outstanding differences other than Temple dispute, which "not agenda question as now in hands ICJ." Stated Defense Minister Lon Nol and Cambodian Ambassador Bangkok Ty Kim Sour would assist Son Sann in negotiations. RKG wishes similar rapprochement with GVN and looking forward negotiations at Saigon. He recalled this connection efforts he had made August 1959 during visit there. I said it impression US Ambassadors Saigon and Bangkok that both GVN and RTG sincerely desired improve relations with Cambodia.

5. I expressed gratification Thai-Cambodian press truce and called attention commendable restraint Vietnamese press in recent months. Sihanouk said he aware and appreciated VN attitude. While Vietnam press at times criticizes Cambodia, as indeed Cambodian press does Vietnam, it carefully abstains personal attacks. Unfortunately same could not be said for Thai press which had carried on campaign vilification and lies. I remarked recent improvement in relations with neighbors clearly demonstrated efficacy conducting foreign relations through establishment diplomatic channels and avoiding limelight of publicity. He indicated agreement.

6. Turning subject additional military aid, I said as I previously informed Foreign Minister Tep Phan we prepared initiate discussions any time and therefore only awaiting RKG give signal. Continued that discussions regarding equipment of police had taken place technical level between Ministry Surface Defense and USOM, but thus far in those between Generals Chase and Lon Nol specific equipment requirements had not been introduced. Sihanouk replied police requirements of lesser importance and moreover technical level talks had proceeded satisfactorily. On other hand, it General Lon Nol's impression Chase awaiting some further authority conduct discussions re military equipment. In circumstances he thought advisable send Lon Nol, together with Son Sann and Nong Kimny, to Washington for talks with Defense and Department.

Comment: (In separate conversation today Lon Nol told Chase he had just received instructions from Prince to proceed to US and expected go within next ten days.) I said there evidently misunderstanding as Chase prepared discuss details FARK needs any time. However if it Sihanouk's desire Lon Nol visit Washington, I sure he would be welcome there.

7. Sihanouk continued that FARK request would be "modest". Not RKG's intention build up large armed forces but merely modernize those already existent, particularly in fields transportation, aviation and communications. RKG obviously has no aggressive designs on neighbors but wishes be in posture defend itself and maintain internal law and order. He cited latter connection need ARV [*ARVN?*] be in position effectively to deal with Viet Minh and Hoa Hao bands.

8. I stressed importance arms discussions be conducted on confidential basis. Sihanouk said he in full agreement as indicated by fact subject had not been mentioned in Cambodian press in recent weeks.

9. Recalling Prince's interest public health, I said USOM elaborating plans establish small health center Takeo and also Medico to set up clinic Ratanakiri Province. Added it my impression need even greater now than some months ago as result transfer provincial medical personnel to Phnom Penh to staff Soviet aid hospital.

10. Sihanouk replied I entirely correct and RKG would greatly appreciate additional American doctors. Even more important was need technological school where young Cambodians could be trained in engineering, communications and other scientific and technological subjects. At present RKG forced send students Paris from whence 8 out of 10 return as Communists. Same true those studying Belgium. They present dire danger to country for while professing to be nationalists their allegiance actually lies elsewhere. During period Son Ngoc Thanh/Sam Sary threat they ostensibly rallied to Prince, but now "this no longer meaningful" they attacking him and government and cooperating with foreign elements, including specifically Viet Minh. His efforts win them back unsuccessful and they would like "boot me out" (*me foutent*). On other hand, Cambodian students who study in US, while pro-American, are first and foremost Cambodians. Indeed of 30-odd who have been there, only one has become more American then Cambodian. Quoting Cambodian proverb to effect that greatest respects of youth are for father, mother, and teacher, Sihanouk said this illustrated great admiration students Kompong Kantuot Teachers' Training Institute have for American faculty advisors and those at Royal School Medicine for French instructors and professors. Similar good influence on youth would result from US staffing proposed technological institution, a development which would be direct interest both our countries. Malcolm Macdonald, he added, had felt idea a good one. He therefore urged USG, possibly in collaboration with Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, give favorable consideration to project, including assistance to RKG in financing construction costs. Indeed he attached so much importance to idea that he intended mention it in reply to President's letter.

11. At conclusion conversation Sihanouk said he leaving for France "next few days" and expected be patient in Clinic Grasse for at least month. Did not mention what further travel plans he had in mind, nor did I consider advisable raise matter. Similarly thought best not question him on reports his desire retire from public life.

12. Our comments on various items raised by Sihanouk will follow in separate messages. [4]

Trimble

[4] In telegram 318 from Phnom Penh, September 15, the Embassy supported Sihanouk's idea of a technological institute under U.S. sponsorship. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/9–1460)

147. Memorandum of a Conference With the President, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, September 27, 1960, 10:45–11:08 a.m. [1]

OTHERS PRESENT

Prince Sihanouk
Ambassador Kimny
Secretary Herter
Assistant Secretary Steeves
Mr. E.S. Glenn (State Dept.)
Colonel Eisenhower

The President opened by thanking Prince Sihanouk for his recent letter of September 3rd. [2] He hoped that our good relations would be improved. He promised that the U.S. would consider sympathetically within our limitations the requests for military aid in the letter.

Prince Sihanouk emphasized that the Cambodian request had been directed only toward modernization of his armed force, not an increase in size. Cambodia's policy is one of peace. However, at the

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Secret. Drafted by John Eisenhower and initialed by Goodpaster. Sihanouk arrived in New York from Paris on September 25 to attend the U.N. General Assembly as head of Cambodia's delegation. A briefing memorandum for the meeting with Sihanouk, prepared in SEA for the President, September 25, is in Department of State, Central Files, 751H.11/9–2560. Another report of this conversation between Sihanouk and Eisenhower is in a memorandum of conversation by Steeves, September 27. (*Ibid.*, 751H.11/10–660)

[2] The text of Sihanouk's letter to Eisenhower, in response to the President's message through Trimble, was transmitted in despatch 71 from Phnom Penh, September 12. (*Ibid.*, 711.11–EI/9–1260) For a summary of Eisenhower's message to Sihanouk, August 3, see footnote 3, *supra*.

present moment there is a marked infiltration of hostile elements across the Cambodian border. One of these elements consists of rebels who have been fighting the authorities in South Viet-Nam. Cambodia must protect herself against these elements. This protection is done with the blessing of Saigon, which has requested Cambodia to be more energetic in rounding up these rebels. What Cambodia needs primarily is some airplanes and transportation to make their force more effective. The President said that our people will study the Cambodia bill of particulars with sympathy. He stressed that we sometimes find difficulty in meeting requests for arms aid. We appreciate the Cambodian situation and approve of what they are doing and support it.

Prince Sihanouk said he understands American problems completely. He does not ask an inordinate amount of aid for the size of his country. He pointed out, however, that the Kingdom of Laos, which is one-half the size of Cambodia, gets more military aid. The President expressed surprise at this statement and remarked that the situation in Laos is so unsettled that it is difficult to figure out our next move.

The President then stressed the importance of the UN to the smaller nations as a means of preventing large-power domination. He referred to the quarrel transpiring in the UN General Assembly at this time regarding the efficiency of the UN as a body and said that neutral as well as Western nations must support the UN. Prince Sihanouk expressed complete agreement and said that his speech will be along the policies outlined by the President, stressing the importance of the UN. He agreed that the UN is the best guarantee of the security of small nations and stated his disagreement with Khrushchev's proposal to substitute a three-man group for the Secretary General's office.

The President said that Khrushchev apparently is trying to make a small security council out of his proposed three-man committee, thereby introducing veto power in the UN Executive. The Prince agreed and said this would be inefficient and unflattering to the UN, since it would admit the lack of unity in that body.

The President took issue with Khrushchev's accusation of Hammarskjold that the latter is a tool of the colonial powers. He referred to Diefenbaker's statement which blamed the Soviets as the modern-day colonials. The Prince expressed complete agreement.

The President predicted that things are going to be difficult for a while, but he hoped that later on the General Assembly can adopt a constructive approach toward world peace. With this in mind, he had spoken early himself to try to set a conciliatory atmosphere in the

General Assembly.[3] The Prince said he had been impressed by the dignity and restraint of the President's speech, which carried the tone which should be used by Chiefs of State. The President thanked the Prince and said that his speech had been planned with the expectation of Mr. Khrushchev's belligerent attitude. He had tried to give reason for a less violent approach. He acknowledged, however, that Khrushchev's attack on the UN, an organization which has done so many beneficial things for the world, had been so violent as to leave the President somewhat bewildered.

The President hoped that the General Assembly will finally reach constructive discussions on disarmament. If this happens, their attitude toward this, of course, will show whether the Soviets desire to negotiate seriously. He pointed out that the Soviets can always change their tactics over night.

The Prince said he hoped that this is so. He heads a small nation and this nation can only wish. The President disagreed somewhat with this feeling and pointed out that there are two kinds of force in the world. One is the force of might; the other is spiritual and moral force. Regarding this latter type of force, small nations can be as effective in setting an example as the big nations. In this regard, the President said that Prince Sihanouk can be as effective as the President himself. The Prince expressed his delight at this idea.

In answer to a question, the Prince said he expects to remain in New York about two weeks. Secretary Herter said the speeches will take two weeks at least. Prince Sihanouk said that he expects to be out of town for four days of the next fourteen in order to visit Kent State University, which is somewhat of a sister University to one in Cambodia. Kent has provided help, including the lending of faculty members, and wishes [him?] to pay a visit.

The President said if all speeches run as long as that of Mr. Castro, all Heads of Government will be here for several months. Despite their passion for complete coverage, our TV stations finally gave up and cut off the speeches of both Khrushchev and Castro. Indeed, Castro took the first half hour to prove that he himself had been treated discourteously in New York. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. The President pointed out the savagelike deportment of the Castro group in the first hotel they entered. The President expressed his perplexity at what Castro is trying to do and said that he can understand Khrushchev better. Although Castro has acted illegally and has confiscated American property freely, the U.S. has tried to be patient and has tried to lead him to the paths of reason.

[3] Reference is to Eisenhower's address before the U.N. General Assembly, September 22, entitled "The Structure of True Peace," printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, October 10, 1960, pp. 551–557.

Despite this, each succeeding speech gets worse. The result is that Castro is losing even his Latin American friends and he will soon be isolated. The President said he cannot understand any nation desiring to make itself the satellite of the Soviet Union. Perhaps Castro desires to make himself a dictator for life and Khrushchev has promised him help. He is, of course, young, being only about 33 years old.

Prince Sihanouk expressed the hope that Castro would develop wisdom with age. Secretary Herter quoted a Dutch proverb that a man of 20 who is not a socialist shows no heart and a man of 40 who is a socialist shows no head. The President said he hoped Castro did not have to live to be 40 to develop some sense. The Prince agreed enthusiastically.

The President and the Prince then retired to face the photographers.

John S. D. Eisenhower

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148. Letter From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Steeves) to the Ambassador in Cambodia (Trimble)[1]

Washington, October 21, 1960.

DEAR BILL: Your letter of September 22, 1960,[2] gave me a very welcome preview of the Cambodian proposals for increased military aid, and I particularly appreciated your comments on the various segments of the Cambodian demands. Meanwhile, the details have arrived in Despatch 93,[3] which I consider an excellent piece of work.

Pending receipt of comments from CINCPAC and Defense on other aspects of your recommendations, we have been grappling here in the Department with the specific problem of jet training, to which

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 1–C.4, Official–Informal Correspondence. Secret; Official–Informal. Drafted by Askew on October 20 and cleared by Cleveland.

[2] In this official–informal letter, Trimble informed Steeves of the initial negotiations with Cambodian officials on U.S. aid. (*Ibid.*)

[3] Dated September 28. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.5–MSP/9–2860) This despatch is summarized in telegram 378 from Phnom Penh, October 1. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5–MSP/10–160; included in the microfiche supplement)

you have attached particular importance.[4] As you may realize, this entails overcoming some rather strong inhibitions, particularly since we hope to avoid, if possible, carrying a split to the higher levels. Our present aim is to reach a position somewhat as follows: Offer grant jet training in the US, but say at the same time that we cannot consider giving jets under MAP for lack of military justification; add that we understand Cambodia's wish to enter the jet age and have no objection to the purchase by the RKG of jets from some free world country. Meanwhile, we would hope to urge the British, French, et al. to step forward at Phnom Penh with their various offers. This position has not yet been approved and has in fact evoked considerable opposition yet to be overcome.

The present tentative plan is to communicate any decision on the Cambodian proposals to the RKG through the usual channels, namely the Embassy and MAAG, and not to General Lon Nol while he is here. In fact, there appears little for us to say to the General other than to invite his comments on the proposals and to assure him they are being given sympathetic consideration. We shall, of course, use any suitable opportunity to refer to the budgetary problem, as you recommend. I would like to take the Cambodians up on their mention of the need to prevent infiltration of neighboring countries via Cambodian territory and would welcome any comments you may care to make on this point and on any others you think we might raise with Lon Nol here. Word has just been received that his visit is again postponed.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

John M. Steeves[5]

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[4] In telegram 274 from Phnom Penh, September 6, Trimble made a special case for providing jet training to Cambodia and warned that if the West did not provide assistance, Cambodia would get it from Sino-Soviet bloc. (Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5622/9–560; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

149. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, October 23, 1960—9 a.m.

464. Department pouch London, Paris. From Parsons.[2] As result of our preoccupation with internal security Laos and Vietnam in face of intensified Commie threat to each, my attention during Cambodian visit was directed more to internal policies bearing on Cambodian survival and less to absent Sihanouk's external policies which might compromise country. Consequently situation there appeared in somewhat novel perspective.

For instance Cambodia is at present by far most stable of three Indo-China states. Also it is one in which people are most united in their loyalty to government. Perhaps regime in power (Sihanouk) has greater survival prospects than that of any other mainland SEA country. Thus viewed Cambodia oddly appears at moment more as asset and less as threat to U.S. interests in area. This is consideration which we should take more consciously into consideration when assessing Sihanouk's erratic behavior in foreign field.

This view may be influenced by present good atmosphere in U.S.-Cambodian relations which contrasts with that obtaining at time my last visit shortly after Dap Chhuon affair in early 59. I believe Ambassador Trimble will comment on this and cite various special indications of desire to show friendship for USA during Irwin–Parsons visit. It would be too much to hope that this will last without setbacks but, in Orwellian terms, while all countries are equal in Cambodian eyes, we decidedly more equal than Commie China or USSR right now. However, Commie China has two important assets which we don't. ChiComs are feared and we are not, and also Commie China is closer.

Least equal of all are neighbors as always. Queen abetted by Prince Monireth made this emphatically and repeatedly clear in our long audience. Sihanouk himself could not have done better job than this extremely sharp pair. Cabinet Ministers acknowledged Thai-Cambodian informal talks going well at U.N. but not so Queen. She went back centuries to explain perfidy of Thai and Annamites and deep animosity which persists today. As Embassy Phnom Penh has

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.00/1–2360. Secret. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, Vientiane, and New Delhi.

[2] Regarding Parsons' visit to Laos, see Documents 428–430. He was accompanied by Assistant Secretary of Defense Irwin and Admiral Riley of CINCPAC; they stayed in Cambodia for only 24 hours. Additional reports of their conversations with Cambodian leaders are enclosed in despatch 121 from Phnom Penh, October 26. (Department of State, Central Files, 102.202/10–2660)

consistently emphasized, this will remain critical problem for U.S. Problem may become more acute wake of Sihanouk's year end trip to bloc capitals including Peiping.

On other hand Sihanouk's internal policies as reflected in our talks have shrewd consistency of some value to us (even though he may weary his supporters by his constant over reactions and resignation from whatever office he has chosen to occupy).

For instance General Lon Nol volunteered (and this is I am told his basic belief) that FARK originated as French mercenary force and its first task was to win people over. This he said took years. He remarked that no matter how large FARK might be it could not cope with internal security problems or meet more serious incursions unless people in country had confidence in its ability to protect them and in its desire to promote their well being. Now he says villagers are volunteering information on caches of arms hidden by Vietminh years ago. Incidentally it seemed to be consensus of Americans in Phnom Penh that Lon Nol is basically more favorable to free world and U.S. particularly than he can afford openly to indicate. This probably should be qualified by recognition that as true Cambodian he no doubt is not eager to be helpful where Thai or Vietnamese concerned.

There are other illustrations of constant effort to tie people closely to Royal Family and government at Phnom Penh. It sufficient merely mention Queen's contempt for Laos King inactivity which she says will demonstrate to whomever wins out there that monarchy has no utility. In Cambodia she indicated principle is just opposite—to move in quickly and make Royal Family center of authority. Cambodia's institutions are being consciously used to this end including traditional oriental device of weekly public audience when anyone can petition Prince and when for political effect he often interferes with due process of law and grants relief to petitioners. Nhiek Tioulong's grandiose and no doubt exaggerated development schemes for remote areas have he says been worked out in close collaboration with Sihanouk and are another facet of this central purpose of national unity and active popular support of regime.

None of foregoing has gone unreported over the years but at policy level in Department I suspect it has gone relatively unnoticed in face of spectacular and irritating Sihanouk moves on international checkerboard. My conclusion on leaving Cambodia is that we would do well to remember that internally Cambodia is relatively solid and there is no intent to give country away to Commies or anyone else (albeit younger, Paris educated intellectuals, 80 pct. of whom, in Sihanouk's own estimate, return here strongly influenced by exposure Communist ideology, represent potential longer term threat). I believe this policy is backed by more ability and vitality in upper circle at Phnom Penh than we sometimes acknowledge. In sum it may be that

Cambodia is less of a liability in region than it appears and that its internal policies as described are in our interest. This should be weighed as we consider our policies toward and cooperation with Cambodia.

Trimble

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150. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, November 2, 1960—6 p.m.

494. For Asst Secretary's Parsons and Steeves from Trimble. Our many messages have emphasized importance of making known to Sihanouk before his departure on bloc visit that US responding favorably, although not in full, to RKG request for increased military and police aid. Importance of doing so in my opinion further underscored by publication October 30 "Neak Chiet Niyum" (NCN) of Sihanouk's detailed report of his mission to US and UN, including account his activities and treatment accorded him by US and other Western, bloc, and neutral countries (reporting fully by despatch).[2] He has little good to say for any these groups but US clearly comes out worst.

Report studded with various indications his pique over lack of attention shown him—inferior treatment in comparison that given Sukarno, Nasser and various African dignitaries in such matters as police escort, absence of high ranking US (and other Western) officials his reception, etc. He also disappointed "rather vague" statement by President in response his request for "minimum modernization" of FARK. Attitude summed up in his statement that "America showed its true face; it is far from recognizing in fact the equality of big and small, as enunciated its constitution and KC [*UN*?] Charter."

I fully appreciate that Sihanouk was very small frog in very large puddle and that we must take manifestations of his exaggerated but habitual sensitivity in our stride. Nevertheless I am concerned by timing within few weeks his departure bloc capitals where he can be expected to receive full red carpet treatment, and feel that unless he

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5-MSP/11-2060. Secret; Priority.

[2] Despatch 93 from Phnom Penh, September 28. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5-MSP/9-2858)

can be brought into better frame of mind by concrete evidence that US is making real effort to be helpful, he will certainly be more receptive to Commie blandishments and offers.

I can also appreciate, as mentioned Steeves' letter October 21,[3] desirability utilizing normal channels to communicate our decisions on Cambodian proposals rather than conveying them through London and hence merely telling him they being given sympathetic consideration. However, I do not think that this will be enough. Sihanouk is no fool and could undoubtedly interpret this as deliberate footdragging on our part designed to deter him from accepting Commie offers during forthcoming trip behind Curtain, and I am afraid this tactic may well have opposite effect on him than intended.

I therefore strongly recommend that Lon Nol at least be informed before he goes to France to report to Sihanouk that we prepared:

(a) Furnish jet training for six pilots;
(b) Provide equipment necessary to bring existing army units up to full TO&E;
(c) Expedite delivery of equipment already funded;
(d) Provide DS for FARK pay and allowances for JCS approved force goal of 31,000;
(e) Suspend 10 percent reduction policy in troop pay and allowances for CY61; and
(f) Furnish additional police equipment along lines recommended Embdes 93.

I would also hope Lon Nol could be informed that balance RKG requests still being studied and decisions will be communicated RKG at later date.

Finally urge that Nong Kimny be informed soonest that ICA prepared finance survey team to study proposed technological institute as recommended Embdes 110[4] and Toica A–473.[5] Believe demonstrated US interest in this pet project will be helpful in putting Sihanouk in better frame of mind.

Trimble

[3] Document 148.
[4] Dated October 13. (Department of State, Central Files, 851H.433/10–1360)
[5] Not found.

151. Editorial Note

General Lon Nol, Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff of the Cambodian Armed Forces, was in Washington as a guest of the Department of Defense, October 31–November 3. On October 31 and November 1, Lon Nol had conversations with officials at the Department of Defense and the International Cooperation Administration. Those discussions were summarized in a memorandum from Robert G. Cleveland to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John M. Steeves, November 1, as follows:

"The General and his party have already held discussions with Defense and ICA officials on the Cambodian proposals for a major, long-term increase in US military and police aid. These demands originally called for aid estimated at about $120,000,000 over a period of several years; they were scaled down by the Country Team to about $41,000,000 over a five-year period. As you know, we are currently trying to formulate a minimum package response which would meet the political need for preventing Cambodian acceptance of bloc military aid.

"We understand that in Defense, Lon Nol insisted firmly that Cambodian demands were fully justified on the basis of Cambodia's needs and he repeatedly requested a response by the US. He appeared not to be moved by indications of the difficulty we are having in justifying an increase of this magnitude in our military aid program. Mr. Irwin reportedly said that we would attempt to have some response for the General before he departs for France to see Prince Sihanouk in about two weeks.

"Similarly at ICA, Lon Nol pressed for a prompt indication of the US response to the Cambodian request for increased police aid." (Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73; Visits & Tours of Cambodian VIPs)

Lon Nol met briefly with Secretary of State Herter on November 2, and exchanged courtesies. Lon Nol then had a substantive meeting at the Department of State with Steeves, Brigadier General Charles H. Chase, Cleveland, and other officials from the Departments of State and Defense. At this meeting, Lon Nol asked for a definitive reply to Cambodian proposals for foreign aid, to which Steeves promised as complete an answer as possible before Lon Nol left the United States later in mid-November. (Memorandum of conversation, November 2; *ibid.*, Central Files, 751H.5–MSP/11–260; included in the microfiche supplement)

On the afternoon of November 3, Lon Nol met with Joseph V. Charyk, Under Secretary of the Air Force, and made two "emphatic requests": that the United States train eight Cambodian jet pilots and provide the Cambodia Air Force with two jet aircraft which those pilots could fly on the occasion of the celebration of Cambodian inde-

pendence next summer. Charyk informed Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., that the Air Force would have no problem complying with these requests and urged a decision. (Memorandum from Charyk to Gates, November 4; Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170, 253 Cambodia; included in the microfiche supplement)

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152. Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Steeves) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant)[1]

Washington, November 8, 1960.

SUBJECT

OCB Consideration of Jet Training and Aircraft for Cambodia

The attached Special Report to the Operations Coordinating Board (Tab A) was prepared in response to the Board's interest in the necessity of developing a position on Embassy Phnom Penh's recommendation that we offer jet training to Cambodia (Tab B).[2] The Special Report goes beyond the question of jet training to include consideration of jet aircraft, since an offer of training to Cambodia, unless specifically qualified, would carry an implicit commitment to furnish aircraft. Any decision touching on the question of providing jet aircraft to Cambodia should be referred to the National Security Council for consideration owing to the Council's specific directive to this effect contained in NSC 6012 (Tab C).[3]

Need for a Favorable and Prompt Response

General Lon Nol, Cambodia's Defense Minister and Chief of the Cambodian Armed Forces, has just completed a brief visit to Washington. He strongly emphasized Cambodia's earnest desire for the increased US military and police aid requested earlier through the Country Team (Tab B) and cited the threats to Cambodia inherent in the troubled conditions in Laos and Viet-Nam. He also emphatically and

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[1] Source: Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Southeast Asia 5. Secret. Drafted by Askew and concurred in by SEA and FE.

[2] Despatch 93 from Phnom Penh; see footnote 2, Document 150.

[3] Reference is to NSC Action No. 2267–c, approved on July 25, in which the Council agreed to refer the question of jets for Cambodia or Vietnam back to the NSC when a policy decision was required. See footnote 12, Document 64. NSC 6012 is printed as Document 65.

repeatedly requested that he be given an indication of the US response prior to his departure, approximately ten days hence, for France to join Prince Sihanouk, Cambodian Chief of State. The latter is scheduled to leave France on or about November 19 for extended visits to Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Mongolia and Communist China. Should Sihanouk conclude, before departing on this trip, that Cambodia's bid for greater US support has been rebuffed, he probably would be receptive to the offers of military aid which bloc countries have extended in the past and which they may be expected to reaffirm on the occasion of Sihanouk's forthcoming visits.

Consequently, I believe our response to the Cambodian requests should be sufficiently favorable to retain Sihanouk's confidence in US support and that it should be communicated to Sihanouk, probably through the Cambodian Ambassador here and General Lon Nol, before Sihanouk departs on his trip to bloc countries. It would also be communicated officially to the Cambodian Government through our Embassy in Phnom Penh.

State–Defense Split

The attached Special Report reflects a divergence of opinion between the Department of Defense and the Department of State. In essence, the State position as approved in principle by Mr. Dillon (Tab D),[4] is that by not qualifying our offer of jet training, we allow the Cambodians to assume that we are prepared to meet their request for jet aircraft when the training is completed. Therefore, it would be necessary to decide now that we are willing to provide such aircraft under the US Military Assistance Program, beginning possibly in fiscal year 1962, and subject, of course, to the availability of funds.

Defense, on the other hand, believes we should not plan to give Cambodia jet aircraft and, therefore, should, in offering the training, specifically tell the Cambodians that we are prepared merely to give them diplomatic assistance to help them procure a few jet aircraft from some other free world sources. Defense also recommends, as a last resort, that we be prepared to help in the financing of six French jet aircraft for Cambodia.

In my opinion, the Defense position does not meet the political requirement for a reasonably favorable US response in the near future to the recent Cambodian proposals for a $120,000,000 increase in US military and police aid. The symbolic importance of the jet component in the Cambodian proposals has repeatedly been emphasized by our Embassy at Phnom Penh. It has gained further stature by reason of

[4] Tab D, a memorandum from T.L. Eliot, Jr., Special Assistant to Dillon, to Parsons, October 31, is not attached. (Department of State, S/P–NSC Files: Lot 62 D 1, Asia, Southeast, US Policy in Mainland (NSC 6012))

present indications that we will be hard put to show the Cambodians a favorable response on other major aspects of their military request. Furthermore, the Defense proposal appears to expose us needlessly to the political risk of confusing and irritating the Cambodians, without having sufficient compensating advantage.

In addition to my belief that an indicated willingness to supply jet aircraft, as well as training, is an essential element in the minimum reponse we can safely give the Cambodians, there are the following considerations:

(a) The time when we no longer will be able to supply and support propeller aircraft (in the categories of trainers and fighters) evidently is not far off. If, therefore, we probably are going to give the Cambodians jets within the next few years in any event, I believe we should do so now when we can garner decided political advantage.

(b) When Mr. Parsons discussed this problem with CINCPAC last month, Admiral Felt said that, if it should be decided for political considerations to grant jet training, it would make better sense to being furnishing jet training aircraft, rather than to continue supplying propeller trainers, as is now contemplated for FY 1962.

(c) By furnishing jets to Cambodia, we may be reducing the problem of obtaining international acceptance of their subsequent introduction into Viet-Nam.

(d) Finally, Cambodia's prospective jet unit undoubtedly will constitute a major object of Cambodian national pride. I believe it would serve US and free world political interests to be associated with what will be regarded by the Cambodians as an outstanding manifestation of their national progress and prestige. Moreover, I believe that French association with this factor would not serve either US or free world interests in the same degree. To date, the French to all intents and purposes have used their influence in Cambodia primarily to uphold the French position there, rather than effectively to promote free world interests.

With regard to reactions in Thailand and Viet-Nam (and elsewhere), I believe we must stand frankly on the contention that a minimum, reasonably favorable response to the Cambodian military demands is necessary to reduce the risk of major Communist bloc gains in Cambodia which would adversely affect Thai and Vietnamese, as well as US, security interests. The current relaxation in tensions between these countries and Cambodia, and recent manifestations of Sihanouk's preoccupation with internal Communist influence (throttling of Communist press, submission of resignation in protest against Communist criticism) should also lessen Thai and Vietnamese concern. (We already are providing Thailand with a sizeable, modern jet program, and Vietnamese pilots are receiving US jet training.) The Defense position emphasizes the danger of strongly

adverse reactions not only in Thailand and Viet-Nam, but also in the Philippines and Formosa, and the risk thereby of weakening SEATO. These fears would appear to be somewhat exaggerated.

Possible Compromise

In the interests of resolving the split position, it was suggested to Defense that we undertake further to consult France and other free world countries with the view to persuading them to make a more acceptable offer to the Cambodians (i.e., provide the aircraft and training on a grant basis), provided, however, that we would supply the aircraft ourselves if necessary as a last resort. Recommendation (b) in the attached Special Report (Tab A) would thus read:

"(b) We seek to encourage other free world countries to make an acceptable offer of jet aircraft to Cambodia, and, in the event we are unsuccessful in this attempt, we be prepared to furnish[5] Cambodia a small number of jet trainers under our military aid program."

Defense did not accept this suggested compromise at the working level, but might be willing to reconsider at the Board.

Finally, should a deadlock develop over this point, you may wish to recommend approving merely the jet training, reserving the question of aircraft for further consideration. I strongly believe the Defense proposal to offer the Cambodians diplomatic assistance in procuring aircraft elsewhere in the free world fails to meet the political requirement for a reasonably favorable response, since it would indicate clearly to the Cambodians that we have no intention of providing aircraft. Therefore, if agreement on a decision in principle to grant aircraft to Cambodia cannot be reached, it would be preferable to limit action at this time to approval of recommendation (a), i.e. to grant training.

[5] The following revision is written on the source text at this point in Merchant's hand: "then consider sympathetically furnishing." Merchant indicated that this revision was to replace the original phrase: "be prepared to furnish."

Attachment

Special Report Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board[6]

Washington, November 7, 1960.

POSSIBLE PROVISION OF JET TRAINING AND JET AIRCRAFT TO CAMBODIA

1. The Cambodian Government has requested a major increase in U.S. grant aid to Cambodian military and police forces. Included in the Cambodian proposals are requests for immediate jet training of from six to eight Cambodian pilots and for provision of jet fighter aircraft when the training has been completed.

2. Prince Sihanouk has repeatedly manifested his determination to push his country into the jet age. Moreover, he has stated repeatedly that if Cambodia does not receive assistance to this end from the West, he will turn to the Sino-Soviet Bloc for help. We hope to achieve a favorable political impact by making our response to the Cambodian requests known to Prince Sihanouk before he departs in mid-November on a trip to Moscow and Peiping.

3. Despite Cambodia's equivocal attitudes in the international field, its popularly-based political stability and anti-Communist domestic policy under Prince Sihanouk's leadership represent an element of strength in the Free World position in Southeast Asia.

4. Our Embassy in Cambodia strongly recommends that we promptly grant the request for jet training on the grounds that a favorable decision on this part of the Cambodian proposals would go a long way toward satisfying Prince Sihanouk that his country's needs are understood by the West; that Cambodian resistance to attractive Sino-Soviet Bloc offers would be strengthened; and that Cambodian pressure for greatly increased military assistance of other kinds would be reduced. The Embassy recommends also that, if other alternatives are not feasible, we consider providing jet aircraft to Cambodia. We consider our support of the Cambodian Armed Forces as an important element in Cambodian resistance to Communist influence. The cost of providing jet training in the United States for eight Cambodian pilots is estimated roughly at $200,000.

5. A statement to the Cambodians at this time that the U.S. is prepared to grant jet training would imply at least a willingness to be of assistance in obtaining jet aircraft later.

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[6] Secret.

6. Accordingly, it is proposed that without prejudice to action on other aspects of the Cambodian proposals:

a. We inform the Cambodians at a suitable time that we are willing to provide jet training promptly for six Cambodian pilots on a grant basis.[7]

State:

b. We be prepared to furnish Cambodia a small number of jet trainers under our military aid program.

Defense:

b. We also inform the Cambodians that we will give such diplomatic assistance as they may wish to assist them to procure a token number of jet aircraft from other Free World sources.

c. We be prepared, as a last resort, to help in the financing of two to six French jet aircraft when the pilots are ready for them.

Annex A

STATE VIEWS[8]

7. Possible objections to providing a jet capability to Cambodia under our grant military assistance program include such factors as:

a. Lack of military justification for the use of jet aircraft in Cambodia at this time;

b. Likely adverse reactions in such friendly countries as Thailand and Viet-Nam, probably followed by requests for increased aid.

8. In this context, various other Free World countries were consulted regarding the Cambodian demands for jet training and aircraft. The French reaction was the most favorable, indicating a readiness to sell jet trainers at about $150,000 each and to provide pilot training as well as technical support.

9. It is believed, however, that the French sales proposal would not be regarded by Sihanouk as an acceptable response to the requests he has directed at the U.S. Owing to the rather unique and, in a sense, politically equivocal position the French have developed in Cambodia, Sihanouk may not even regard the French offer as a mark of Western support. He would probably still expect some further sign from the U.S.

[7] Merchant added in his own hand the following additional phrase at this point in the source text: "with the question of the source of aircraft to be further considered."

[8] Secret.

10. It is believed that in addition to granting jet training, we should be prepared to provide such aircraft ourselves. The Cambodians probably could be induced to accept trainers, such as the T–37, in lieu of fighter aircraft.

Annex B

DEFENSE VIEWS[9]

11. As a political measure, approval of the Cambodian request for the training of a few jet pilots can be accepted in order to help create a favorable impression upon Sihanouk before he goes to Moscow and Peiping in late November.

12. A promise to provide U.S. jet aircraft, however, is not considered desirable at this time. Three major drawbacks are seen in providing jet aircraft to Cambodia under our grant Military Assistance program:

a. Lack of military justification for jet aircraft in Cambodia at this time.

b. Strongly adverse reactions in Viet-Nam (which, under the Geneva Accords is not allowed jets), Thailand, the Philippines and Taiwan, and the possible weakening of SEATO.

c. Increased aid requests from the countries listed in the above subparagraph.

13. One related matter which should be considered is the effect of the Laos situation. Viet-Nam and Thailand consider our actions there to demonstrate a lack of firm support for avowed anti-Communists. If we now voluntarily, and for no apparent quid pro quo, increase our aid to the noted neutralist, Sihanouk, our prestige will be further diminished among some of our firmest supporters. It would therefore be advantageous to be able to tell Thailand and Viet-Nam that we have made a minimum response to the Cambodian military requests and that this was considered desirable only in order to reduce the risk of major Communist bloc gains in Cambodia.

14. An alternate and preferable solution to the Cambodian desire for jet aircraft is the provision of such aircraft from other Free World sources. Consultations have been held with various other countries with respect to the possibility of their granting or selling such aircraft to the Cambodians. The best offer received thus far is the French offer to sell some trainers on which machine guns could be mounted and to include pilot training and a technical mission at a price of $150,000 per aircraft. In view of the fact that the French are the official Cambodian military advisers (and were consulted in the preparation of the

[9] Secret.

Cambodian request for $94 million of additional U.S. aid), it appears that the French should be urged to make the offer at lower terms in view of their desire to maintain the French "position" in Cambodia. Cambodia appears to be a most appropriate place to push for the execution of our newly announced policy of getting our West European Allies to assist in sharing the Free World defense burden. If the French do no better, and no other country makes a better offer, there remains the possibility of sharing the cost through use of U.S.-held counterpart funds in France.

15. Another possibility is that of inducing the Japanese to make a gift of a small number of their excess F–86 aircraft.

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153. Editorial Note

At the Operations Coordinating Board meeting on November 9, the Board made the following decision:

"It was agreed that subject to the provisions of NSC Action 2267c the Cambodians be informed that the US is prepared to provide jet training in response to their request, and should the Cambodians inquire, that they be told the provision of jet aircraft will be given sympathetic consideration at an appropriate time, without prejudice to source of supply.

"It was further agreed that the Departments of State and Defense would examine alternate Free World supply of jet aircraft to Cambodia on a grant, sale, or cost-sharing basis, recognizing that while such alternate source of supply might be desirable, it may be necessary to provide the aircraft from US sources.

"A memorandum reflecting the foregoing will be transmitted to the President after concurrence by the Secretaries of State and Defense." (Notes by Charles E. Rogers, November 9; Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Preliminary Notes IV)

154. Editorial Note

At 6:30 p.m., November 10, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Merchant and the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Gordon Gray discussed Cambodian jets and jet training on the telephone as follows:

"Mr. Gray, after finishing another topic, continued that he had bad news on Cambodia. He had sent the minute to the President, and Ann Whitman was holding it because Mr. Gray was going to get concurrences of the Secretaries of both State and Defense. (Mr. Merchant interjected that he had delivered his last evening.) Mr. Gray said that Tom Gates doesn't believe in it at all. Jack Irwin has passed this on—Mr. Gates feels that if the country had jets, they couldn't take off without over-flying the borders. Mr. Irwin had said that if the meetings had included Mr. Gates, perhaps Mr. Gates might have had a different view. In the meantime, Mr. Gray has had a lot of trouble with Treasury because they wouldn't go along as long as there was anything in it that might even suggest financial procurement from an alternate source—this was a balance of payments problem. He had told Andy to show to the President only the first part of the minute, for that is all that his decision was needed on. With reference to provision of aircraft, sympathetic consideration could be given at an appropriate time. Everybody agreed there was no military necessity for this and that this came to a political decision. Mr. Gray said he had told Andy that he would talk to Mr. Merchant and undertake to find out if the Secretary felt strongly enough about it to push this matter at present. This would mean that the President would have to be told about Defense's disagreement. Mr. Gray has to let Ann Whitman know tomorrow morning what to do with the minute and he thought perhaps Mr. Merchant could get in touch with Defense tonight so that a decision on the matter could be taken tomorrow morning. It would be perfectly all right with him if State took it up with Defense. Then, if it is decided that State feels strongly that the project should go ahead, it will be presented to the President, giving State's view and Defense's objection.

"Mr. Merchant doubted that anything could be done this evening, and Mr. Gray suggested that perhaps the matter could be discussed again tomorrow morning. Mr. Merchant promised to call him some time between 9 and 11:30, November 11." (Notes on a telephone conversation, November 10; Department of State, Central Files, 716.02/11–1060)

Merchant next telephoned Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Robert H. Knight, at 7:10 p.m., to complain as follows:

"Mr. Merchant then voiced his complaint that Defense had withdrawn its concurrence on the jets for Cambodia on the eve of Sihanouk's departure for the Iron Curtain. Jack Irwin had given Defense's approval at OCB, and an agreed minute was sent by Gordon Gray to the President at Augusta, but now Gordon Gray was unable to say

that it had Defense and State concurrence as Mr. Gates refused to go along with Mr. Irwin's decision in the matter. Mr. Merchant said he hadn't as yet had a chance to talk to the Secretary about this, but he felt he had to say now that this was a political decision and that there actually is no commitment to supply the aircraft.

"Mr. Knight interjected here that if we ultimately sold them the aircraft, we would be better off. He said he would check into it as he wasn't familiar with this matter and would call Mr. Merchant back." (*Ibid.*)

Merchant and Gray talked again at 10 a.m., November 11:

"Mr. Merchant said that the Secretary would like to have it put to the President that he strongly supports the furnishing of jet training to Cambodia on political grounds. The Secretary is going to give Tom Gates a call this morning just as a matter of courtesy to let him know that he disagrees with him and that it is being put up to the President.

"Mr. Gray thought that perhaps this call might have a melting effect on Mr. Gates." (*Ibid.*)

At 11:40 a.m., November 11, Gray telephoned Merchant and explained the situation as follows:

"Mr. Gray said he had just talked to the President who had earlier been informed of a part of the Cambodian deal by the Secretary of Treasury's excitement about off-shore procurement. The minute will have to be changed on that. Mr. Gray had told the President what was involved, stating that we would provide only training and not volunteer anything about the aircraft. If they asked about the aircraft, we should give them the response which had been agreed upon—that the matter would be given sympathetic consideration at the appropriate time. The President was told of Tom Gates' disagreement and the Secretary of State's feeling that it was important from a political point of view. He said this grant of training was fine and assumed that training would be in this country. Mr. Gray replied that he did not know.

"Mr. Merchant said he did not know for sure. His impression was that it would be.

"Mr. Gray said he thought the President made that assumption. It was not a condition. The President wants this project to get started right away. Mr. Merchant said he would get in touch with Mr. Cleveland. When speaking of numbers of pilots, Mr. Gray thought we had better think in terms of 10 rather than 6 because some of them will be refused. That probably was the point that Mr. Cleveland would discuss with Defense, but, in any event, it should be done promptly.

"Mr. Gray promised that he would send to State a copy of his memorandum of this telephone conversation with the President. (*Ibid.* The memorandum is *infra.*)

Gray also called Merchant at noon, November 11, to inform him of Secretary of Defense Gates' opposition. (*Ibid.*)

155. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Gray) in Washington and the President in Augusta, Georgia, November 11, 1960[1]

SUBJECT

Provision of Jet Training and Jet Aircraft to Cambodia

There is attached a copy of a memorandum for the President[2] and and OCB minute[3] which had been sent to Augusta by General Goodpaster on November 10. Subsequent to the dispatch of these documents it appeared that the Secretary of Defense took a contrary view to the decision with respect to furnishing jet pilot training and the Secretary of the Treasury took exception to the agreement as to sources of jet aircraft. When these facts were communicated to General Goodpaster he felt it desirable that I talk with the President.

On the morning of November 11, I ascertained from Under Secretary Merchant that the Secretary of State wished to press the matter with the President in spite of the disagreement of the Secretary of Defense. Also, I agreed with representatives of the Secretary of the Treasury that the source problem would be considered not agreed and would be further considered in the OCB.

At approximately noon, the President having been informed of the dilemma by Mrs. Whitman, telephoned me. He had before him the documents heretofore referred to.

I said to the President that the immediate requirement was his approval of paragraph b of the OCB minute. I explained to him that the Secretary of State wished to press for his approval in spite of the Secretary's knowledge that the Secretary of Defense was opposed. I said that I felt that it was generally agreed that there was no military requirement for training or aircraft and it came down largely to a political matter. In this case I felt that the President would probably accept the views of the Secretary of State.

The President said that he would be but he was concerned about any implication that there would be off-shore procurement of jet aircraft from the point of view of the balance of payment problem. I explained to the President that we were not asking his approval at this

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Project Clean Up, Meetings with the Pres. Secret. Drafted by Gray on November 15.

[2] This memorandum, November 10, briefing the President on the background to the request by the Cambodian Government for jet aircraft training and jet aircraft is attached, but not printed.

[3] Below.

time of paragraph c and that this would be further considered with the understanding that the documents would not show any contemplated off-shore procurement.

The President then said he wished us to go ahead with informing the Cambodian Government. He wished to make it clear that he understood that the training was to be done in this country; that the Cambodian Government understand that we wished to proceed promptly; that we should take care if the requirement was for six pilots to invite 10 or so to participate in view of the inevitable rejection of some of the individuals; and that if the Cambodian Government raised the question of jet aircraft we would respond that the question would be given sympathetic consideration at an appropriate time. The President underscored the need for a clear indication that we wished to move promptly with the training.

Gordon Gray

Attachment

MINUTE FOR OCB MEETING OF NOVEMBER 9, 1960[4]

Cambodia—Jet Training and Aircraft

(a) Discussed a State–Defense report on the possible provision of jet training and jet aircraft to Cambodia.

(b) Subject to the provisions of NSC Action 2267 c, agreed that the Government of Cambodia be informed that the United States is prepared to provide jet training in response to their request. Further agreed that, if the Cambodians inquire concerning the provision of jet aircraft, they be informed that the question will be given sympathetic consideration at an appropriate time. In view of the agreement reflected below, noted that any discussion of jet aircraft with the Cambodians at this time should be conducted in such manner as not to prejudice the actual source of supply of such aircraft.

(c) Further agreed (1) that the Departments of State and Defense would examine possible alternate sources of Free World supply of jet aircraft to Cambodia on a grant, sale or cost-sharing basis, such as France, Japan or Australia; (2) recognized that, while such alternate source of supply might be desirable, it may be necessary to provide the aircraft from U.S. sources.

(d) Noted that the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, in order to comply with NSC Action 2267 c, would transmit to the President a memorandum containing the foregoing as soon as concurred in by the Secretaries of State and Defense.

[4] Secret.

156. Memorandum for the Record by the Officer in Charge of Cambodian Affairs (Askew)[1]

Washington, November 11, 1960.

SUBJECT

President's Views on Jet Training and Jet Aircraft for Cambodia

The substance of the President's remarks on this subject as relayed by Mr. Gray to Mr. Merchant, and by the latter to Mr. Parsons on November 11, 1960 are as follows:

The President authorized the Department to proceed on the basis of the Minute of the OCB Meeting, November 9, 1960,[2] subject to the following conditions:

1. Evade a definite reply to the Cambodians regarding the provision of jet aircraft.
2. The jet aircraft are not to be provided through offshore procurement. Such a procedure is to be eliminated from consideration.
3. The President assumes the jet training is to be provided in the United States; if not, he is to be informed.
4. The jet training should start immediately.
5. If the plan is to train six pilots, the Cambodians should be asked to send ten candidates to allow for rejections, etc.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 63 D 73, 2.C. U.S. Military Assistance, General 1960. Secret.

[2] Attached *supra*.

157. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, December 9, 1960.

SUBJECT

Notes on Cambodian Developments for Tri-Partite Talks at Paris

Sihanouk's current tour of certain Sino-Soviet bloc countries and the commitments he may undertake with the Communist regimes are the major subjects of interest at present. Some results of his trip to Moscow already are available (see below); his visit to Communist China will be taking place toward the middle of December. It is expected that he will sign a friendship and non-aggression pact (or worse) in Peiping and may receive further economic aid, possibly for the Phnom Penh–Sihanoukville railroad. Sihanouk is scheduled to return to Phnom Penh December 17 or 18 and has said he will then make statements on the outcome of his trip.

Moscow Communiqué. A joint Soviet-Cambodian statement issued December 3 (Tab A)[2] paid homage to several current Soviet themes, including general and total disarmament, liquidation of foreign military bases, an extraordinary UNGA with Chiefs of State, admission of CPR, etc. and indicated Cambodian acceptance of a technical school to be constructed by the Soviets in Cambodia as a gift. The Cambodians also requested (and obtained commitments for) Soviet aid ("credits" and technicians) for hydropower stations and mineral prospecing. (No mention of military aid.)

Status of U.S. Offer of Additional Aid. On November 12, 1960 we gave the Cambodians our preliminary response (Tab B)[3] to their

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Cambodia) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Political Affairs, From January 1960. Confidential. Drafted by Askew and cleared by Cleveland.

[2] The communiqué was summarized in telegram 1358 from Moscow. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 320/12–360) Tab A included telegram 621 from Phnom Penh, December 7, in which the Embassy commented on Sihanouk's ongoing trip behind the Iron Curtain. The telegram ended with the following summary:

"In sum, Prague and Moscow communiqués denote definite leftward swing by Sihanouk, but not so far as to warrant conclusion he intends abandon neutrality for closer alignment with bloc. In talk Afro-Asian diplomats Moscow, he reportedly stated Cambodia would continue follow policy 'strict neutrality'. What is important is trend and what this may foretell for future." (*Ibid.*, 851H.433/12–760)

[3] An account of the discussion between Parsons and Ambassador Nong Kimny, November 12, is in a memorandum of conversation of that date. (*Ibid.*, 751H.5–MSP/11–260; included in the microfiche supplement) Tab B is attached to that memorandum of conversation.

proposals for increased military aid. The response was limited mainly to what could be done in FY 1961 and included:

a) Training of up to ten Cambodian jet pilots;
b) Equipment for an Engineer Construction Battalion;
c) Three additional LCM's;
d) Three additional M–24 tanks;
e) Additional modern small arms and crew-served weapons for existing regular units;
f) 10,000 carbines from surplus stocks for paramilitary forces and the offer to make more available on a sales basis;
g) Reduction of only 5% instead of the usual 10% in the US contribution to the pay and allowances of the Cambodian armed forces; and
h) Additional training and equipment for the national forces.

We agreed to be guided by the Cambodian proposals in future years. The dollar cost of the additional military and police aid for FY 1961 is estimated at a maximum of $2.7 million. We also informed the Cambodians on this occasion of our readiness to send a survey team to determine whether and how we could help in the establishment of a technological institute. (*Note:* We have informed the French, British and other interested allies of our response in general terms, not including the dollar value.)

The Cambodians have not as yet responded to our offer, although both Ambassador Nong Kimny and Foreign Minister Tep Phan said they would immediately forward the offer to Prince Sihanouk (then in France).

Our Ambassador at Phnom Penh believes that Sihanouk's acceptance of the Soviet technical school in the face of our offer reflects "blatant two-facedness by Sihanouk" and a deliberate slap at the United States. He fears that it reveals a sharper prospective shift toward the bloc than had previously been anticipated. He reports that the French in Phnom Penh believe Sihanouk in effect is now attempting to play the Soviets against the Chinese Communists for aid, much as he has been playing West against East. Our Ambassador recommends we consider the possibility of administering "shock treatment" by cutting US aid after Sihanouk returns to Phnom Penh and the extent of his commitments to the bloc has becme clear. (Tab C)[4]

(*Comment:* There would appear to be at least a possibility that Sihanouk was ensnared by the Soviets on the technical school offer and that he did not intend deliberately to embarrass the US on this score. His prompt protestations through (Tab D)[5] Tep Phan that he

[4] Tab C, telegram 615 from Phnom Penh, December 6, not attached. (Department of State, Central Files, 851H.433/12–660)

[5] Tab D, telegram 609 from Phnom Penh, December 6, not attached. (*Ibid.*, 851H.433/12–660)

had not raised this matter with the USSR may be true. In any event, we probably should hold our fire until we can assess Sihanouk's actions and motives with more assurance.)

Cambodian-Lao Neutralization Scheme. It is noteworthy that the Moscow communiqué made no mention of Sihanouk's proposal for Cambodian-Lao neutralization, guaranteed by "interested powers" under UN auspices. The communiqué notes that the 1954 Geneva agreement is a good basis for safeguarding and strengthening peace in former Indochina. It would thus appear that the Soviets did not support Sihanouk's idea and, instead, are attempting to reinstitute the Geneva mechanism. (The British also have indicated a preference for reviving Geneva and the ICC to Sihanouk's scheme, which also calls for "neutral" supervisory teams.) Meanwhile, recent indications in New York have been that the Cambodians were no longer pushing their neutralization proposal very vigorously. (Tab E)[6] A different note, however, was sounded in Vientiane December 3 by a Lao Foreign Office circular strongly supporting Sihanouk's plan (Tab F).[7]

Thai-Cambodian Talks. After initially urging both countries to undertake conciliatory talks, we had nothing more to do with the negotiations until Nong Kimny requested US good offices December 3 in connection with a problem on extradition of two specified "convicted criminals" (Sam Sary and A Seap) from Thailand. We subsequently raised the matter informally with the Thai in Washington and informed Nong Kimny of the result, namely that the Thai had difficulty dealing with specified individuals in an international agreement and had requested instructions on possible compromise language.

We have asked USUN to inform the UN Secretary General's mediator of the Thai-Cambodian talks (Engen of Norway) of our action and to suggest that a bit of guidance or mediation from him would appear to be desirable. (Tab G)[8] The talks have been concerned primarily with press attacks, border control and extradition of criminals.

We also suggested to USUN that this may be an appropriate opportunity to raise the possibility of a joint Cambodian-Thai-Vietnamese declaration of amity. (Tab H)[9]

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[6] Tab E, telegram 1647 from USUN, December 6, not attached. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/15–660)

[7] Tab F, telegram 1077 from Vientiane, December 7, not attached. (*Ibid.*, 751G.00/12–760)

[8] Tab G, telegrams 789 to Bangkok and 1089 to USUN, December 3 and 7, not attached. (*Ibid.*, 651H.92/12–360 and 651H.92/12–760, respectively)

[9] Tab H, instruction CA–4577, November 18, not attached. (*Ibid.*, 751H.00/11–1860)

158. Telegram From the Embassy in Cambodia to the Department of State[1]

Phnom Penh, December 23, 1960—3 p.m.

741. Department pouch London and Paris. Reference: Embtel 621 to Department.[2] Following Embassy preliminary comments Sihanouk's visit Red China to date on basis joint communiqué and summary supplementary protocols signed Peiping December 12 (released Phnom Penh December 22) and various press dispatches covering trip:

1. Negotiation treaty friendship and non-aggression envisaged since Chou En-lai visit here May and presumably corresponds with that between ChiCom and Burma. Text not yet available.[3]

2. ChiCom respect and full support policy peace, neutrality, independence and sovereignty followed by RKG also anticipated. Noteworthy ChiCom assurance military support case aggression by neighbors, which Chou En-lai gave in speech here, not reiterated in communiqué.

3. RKG support ChiCom admission to UN also nothing new. However Sihanouk's praise continuing efforts ChiCom to safeguard world peace and "to support all oppressed people" hardly consistent his April 1959 criticism ChiCom action Tibet and discreet silence Indian border aggressions. Furthermore Sihanouk's "complete sympathy" for struggle Chinese people for defense territorial integrity their country seems to imply support ChiCom claim Taiwan.

4. Mutual adherence Bandung principles in line Sihanouk's repeated past declarations on subject.

5. Joint condemnation "acts of certain countries" designed create tension in Southeast Asia and intervention internal affairs other countries, coupled with sympathy for Lao people in their "just struggle against foreign intervention to maintain peace, neutrality, national independence and unity" obviously aimed at RTG, GVN and US, although Sihanouk presumably turned down ChiCom demand that they be specifically named. No reference to support Souvanna government in contrast Moscow communiqué. Also Sihanouk ignored Chou En-lai's attacks on US in responding latter's speech on occasion signing treaty friendship.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651H.93/12–2360. Confidential. Repeated to Hong Kong, Saigon, Bangkok, Vientiane, New Delhi, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[3] On Decembr 12, the People's Republic of China issued a joint statement with Sihanouk, protocols on economic and technical aid, application of the 1956 Economic Aid Agreement, an agreement on navigation, and exchange of letters on Chinese technicians to Cambodia, and a Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Nonaggression. Texts are printed in *Peking Review*, December 20, 1960, p. 14, and December 27, 1960, p. 10.

6. Like Moscow communiqué, that issued Peiping makes no allusion Sihanouk's Laos–Cambodia neutrality belt proposal. However in speech December 19 Sihanouk called for meeting ChiCom, Soviets, US, India, Thailand, DRV, SVN and Cambodia with object of "saving Laos and peace in Southeast Asia and world." Although theoretically evenly balanced with three participants each from East and West blocs plus two neutrals, suggested composition actually weighted against West by omission UK and France and inclusion "neutral" Cambodia.

7. Support struggle for world peace and general disarmament, including prohibition nuclear weapons, and opposition colonialism echo statements contained Moscow communiqué. On other hand, advocacy ChiCom proposal for mutual peace and non-aggression pact "among countries of Asia and on shores of Pacific" and transformation of entire area into nuclear-free zone represents new wrinkle. Similarly support peoples of Latin America, as well as of Asia and Africa, in their struggle against colonialism and to preserve national independence appears crack at US.

8. Sihanouk's invitation Liu Shao-ch'i to visit Cambodia and latter's acceptance follows pattern set invitation Khrushchev.

9. Increased ChiCom TC and economic aid foreseen in separate agreements signed. According reference to them in communiqué and supplementary protocols, they provide for augmented TC assistance, including development Cambodian agriculture, industry and natural resources; further equipment for expansion textile factory; soda processing plant from ChiCom and paper factory; small steel mill and machine shop (latter presumably to make simple agricultural equipment); establishment joint shipping company to operate between Chinese ports and Sihanoukville; ChiCom survey party for Phnom Penh–Sihanoukville railroad, and technicians for development rice, tea and fruit. Value additional aid fixed at roughly $11.5 million (400 million riels), probably exclusive steel mill and machine shop, although this not clear from context. Total appears substantially less than RKG had hoped to obtain.

10. Sihanouk's agreement to establish Khmer-Chinese friendship association here in contrast RKG foot-dragging on our bi-national center project.

11. Fact neither communiqué and protocols, nor speeches, make any mention ChiCom military aid would seem indicate Sihanouk has again turned down Chinese arms offer. Nevertheless possibility cannot be excluded that this covered in secret agreements, nature of which to be announced later.

12. Although Peiping communiqué in line leftist swing by Sihanouk noted in those signed Prague and Moscow, it would appear to be less pronounced. Therefore, while obviously greatly pleased and flattered by attentions showed him Peiping and deeply impressed by his

visit, Sihanouk seems to have been aware of danger going too far. Homecoming and National Congress speeches should show whether this interpretation correct.

Trimble

LAOS

I. U.S. CONCERN WITH THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LAOS, JANUARY–AUGUST 1958 [1]

159. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, January 13, 1958, 2:30 p.m. [2]

SUBJECT

Current Problems in U.S.-Lao Relations

PARTICIPANTS

Laos
His Highness Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister of Laos
His Excellency Leuam Insisiengmay, Minister of Finance
His Excellency Ngon Sananikone, Minister of National Defense
His Excellency Tiao Souk, Minister of Public Works
His Excellency Ourot R. Souvannavong, Ambassador of Laos
Mr. Keo Viphakone, Counselor, Embassy of Laos

United States
The Secretary of State
C. Douglas Dillon, Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Affairs
Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
Andrew H. Berding, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Dr. D.A. FitzGerald, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Administration
J. Graham Parsons, The American Ambassador to Laos
Kenneth T. Young, Jr., Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs
William V. Turnage, Acting Director, Office of International Financial and Development Affairs
Eric Kocher, Deputy Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs

[1] For previous documentation, see *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 577 ff. A combined microfiche supplement to this volume and to volume XV will be published covering the East Asia-Pacific region, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, and Malaya.

[2] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 611.51J/1–1358. Secret. Drafted by Patricia M. Byrne and concurred in by Kocher and Robertson. Souvanna Phouma was visiting Washington on an unofficial basis, January 13–16. Prior to his arrival, the Embassy in Vientiane sent an analysis of the general situation in Laos and background information on the military and political agreements between the Royal Lao Government and the Pathet Lao. (Telegrams 1114 and 1165 from Vientiane, January 3 and 10; *ibid.*, 033.51J11/1–358 and 033.51J11/1–1058) The Department of State prepared a briefing paper for Secretary Dulles, January 11. (*Ibid.*, Conference Files: Lot 62 D 181, CF 956) The telegrams and briefing paper are included in the microfiche supplement.

Patricia M. Byrne, Officer in Charge,
Laos Affairs
Charles Sedgwick, Interpreter
Edmund S. Glenn, Interpreter

The Secretary opened the meeting at 2:30 p.m. with the statement that it was of great satisfaction to the President, the Secretary, and their associates that the Prime Minister was good enough to come here to talk over some of the problems of Laos, problems which were also of some concern to us. He recalled the pleasure of meeting Souvanna Phouma in Vientiane three years ago[3] and earlier at San Francisco in 1951.[4]

Laos, the Secretary continued, was in terms of population and area what might be called a small country, but no independent state could really be judged small. Just as each individual has his own human dignity, so that whatever his position, rank, or class he was in his own right important, so it was that under the doctrine of sovereign equality we accepted as our guide in international dealings that the importance of a country was not judged by its population, resources, or the size of its territory, but rather by whether it was an independent member of the society of nations exercising the rights appertaining to any independent state.

The preservation of those qualities in Laos was, as the Prime Minister knew, a matter of concern, as the United States was concerned over the independence of every one of the free nations of the world. We were concerned not just as an act of charity but rather because the United States, which was itself born a relatively small nation, had always wanted to live in a world environment in which the other members were free and independent.

We did not, the Secretary said, like the concept of Communist imperialism, which attempted to bring all nations under the rule of a single party, suppressing freedom and dignity. This concept had already been applied in 18 nations, the independence of which for all intents and purposes was gone. Their governments were puppets under the manipulation of the Communist parties, which were in turn responsive to the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party.

We did not believe that all individuals should be forced to conform to a single doctrine which destroyed independence and substituted another system. Because we did not like such a system we contributed to other states to help them maintain their national independence.

To the United States this seemed the great issue of the time.

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[3] See *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 610 ff.

[4] Both Dulles and Souvanna Phouma were participants at the Conference for the Conclusion and Signature of the Treaty of Peace with Japan, September 4–8, 1951.

The Secretary recognized that there might be differences of opinion as to the precise nature of the Pathet Lao leadership and its political and military elements. He did not, however, think it profitable to engage in debate on the subject. The Prime Minister had certain qualifications by which to judge the matter as a result of his intimate knowledge of the situation in Laos. We also had certain qualifications from our world-wide experience in the way international Communism operates, in the subtlety of its means and the disguising of its purposes until too late. Since we each approached the problem from a different viewpoint, we perhaps reached different conclusions. We respected those of the Prime Minister and hoped he would ours, each recognizing an element of rightness in the views of the other.

The Prime Minister, continued the Secretary, had brought about a development in Laos which we all desired: The reunification of the country. He would in a sense be conducting a novel experiment. Three other countries had been divided as a result of struggles between the Communists and the non-Communists: Korea, Viet-Nam, and Germany. The armistice agreements provided for initial division and then eventual reunification. Of these divided countries, Laos was the first to be reunified; the other three had not considered they could be reunified on terms preserving their freedom and independence. The Prime Minister did consider the Kingdom of Laos could be so reunified. Our attitude would inevitably depend upon our assessment as to whether or not the Lao Government took a realistic view of the danger. Laos might not feel the danger to be so great as we did, but any effort at reunification involved certain risks and hazards.

The Secretary hoped the Prime Minister at least shared our view that there was danger in the present situation and that the new elements participating for the first time in the political life of Laos might be so astute as to end up by taking over the government. If the Prime Minister did not recognize the danger, there was a great gulf between us. If he did, then the gulf could be bridged.

We had no greater desire than to see the successful consummation of the experiment without danger to the future integrity and independence of the Kingdom. If it were successful, it would be of significance not only for Laos but for other countries which sought reunification but for which reunification would thus far have meant a loss of independence.

The Secretary explained that he had had prepared a paper[5] (which he gave Souvanna Phouma) on the techniques employed by the Communists in Europe which might provide useful ideas of the

[5] Entitled "The Communist Seizure of Power in Eastern Europe." It has not been found. Dulles requested the paper from Robertson on January 6. (Memorandum from Dulles to Robertson, January 6; Department of State, Central Files, 033.51J11/1–658; included in the microfiche supplement)

kind of thing the Prime Minister and his associates should be on guard against. From its beginnings 40 years ago as a small party with no power, international Communism now controlled nearly one-third the people of the earth and 18 formerly independent nations. The experience of this revolutionary party was available to agents wherever they might be. They had immense skill in the art of subversion and internal take-over, skill to hide and then strike down the opposition. Some of the experience we gained in Europe might be helpful to Laos, where we assumed Communist influence was at work.

Turning to the matter of economic assistance, and he assumed we could find a basis to continue it, the Secretary hoped the Lao could eliminate those aspects of the present administration of the program which almost inevitably led to the undue profit of some, chiefly as a result of the artificial exchange rate. He hoped while the Lao were here, if it seemed appropriate to continue American assistance to a government vigilant and dedicated in the defense of its independence, that an agreement on monetary reform could be reached.

The Secretary again expressed appreciation for the Prime Minister's coming here to set forth his government's estimate of the present situation. There would be difficult days ahead, but the fact that the Lao were talking things over showed they regarded us as friends, as indeed we thought we were and wished to continue to be. He was confident that out of these talks would come fruitful understanding for the future.

After recalling his first meeting with the Secretary at the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference in 1951, Prince Souvanna Phouma thanked the Secretary for treating his small country on a basis of equality. In spite of this thought, however, newly independent Laos considered itself a child, especially in relation to the United States.

The Prime Minister said the problem of maintaining Laos' independence in the present situation disturbed the United States. He agreed with us that there were problems and he did not misunderstand the Communist danger. As he had said and would continue to say in the National Assembly and before Pathet Lao representatives, he would be the first to fight the Communists if they intervened in Laos' internal affairs and attempted to impose their ideology.

Laos always wished to be on good terms with all nations, especially its neighbors. It had long common borders with Communist China and North Viet-Nam. He felt that if these two regimes were not appeased, Laos could never solve its internal problem. He had therefore gone to Peiping and Hanoi in 1956[6] and had received their

[6] Souvanna Phouma visited Peiping August 21–26, 1956, and then traveled to Hanoi.

assurances they would not interfere. He had then turned to the Pathet Lao question and the reunification of Laos.

In the past Laos had lost some western areas to Thailand, and in 1903 the French detached Stung Treng, giving it to Cambodia, and Darlac, which went to Annam. Thus territorially reduced, Laos could not accept the loss of the provinces of Sam Neua and Phong Saly, which had only been regained from Tonkin in 1932. Reunification was therefore essential.

There was another factor which many foreigners ignored; that is, although it was true the Pathet Lao felt Communist influence through direct contact with the Viet Minh, one could not accuse them all of being Communist. In 1946 the Prime Minister participated in the Lao Issara movement which could not accept the return of the French to Laos. The group emigrated to Bangkok and there worked with the Viet Minh to gain the independence of Laos. With the signature of the Accords of 1949 with France, which Souvanna Phouma witnessed in Paris, the Lao Issara decided to dissolve and did so on October 24, 1949. Most members returned to Laos. His half-brother Prince Souphanouvong, however, judged Lao independence incomplete and continued to collaborate with the Viet Minh to obtain total independence for Laos.

Since 1954, when the Pathet Lao got back to Vientiane, they had recognized their error. They wished to return to the national community, but with certain advantages. Both parties tried to settle the question between them, keeping the International Control Commission out of the discussions.

On the supposition the Pathet Lao were 100 percent Lao before they were other things, the Government concluded the accords of November 1957 which permitted it to reinstall its administration in the two provinces. In the ceremonies transferring authority, the population, which had remained faithful to the Government, welcomed its representatives as liberators. There were perhaps 100 or at most 200 Communists among the Pathet Lao; the Government could not sacrifice the rest of the 500,000 people in the two provinces for this small group.

The Government did not, however, minimize the danger and had taken precautions against subversion. Recent legislation had been modified to require the death penalty for those defying the regime. And at the next session of the Assembly (May 1958), a law would be passed making the Communist Party illegal. The Government had wished to pass such a law during the last session, but the Pathet Lao had requested a postponement on the ground that it would create dissidence. They would be ready for such a law later, however.

Not all the Pathet Lao were Communist, as was proven by their having taken an oath to King, Constitution, and Buddha in a pagoda after the investiture of the coalition government. Another example was that Thao Ma, an important Pathet Lao leader, had knelt before the Prime Minister in Sam Neua in full view of the people whom heretofore he had commanded. Some indeed had been won over by Communism, but so small a fraction did not justify the sacrifice of the majority of the population and the young people who had been forced into the Pathet Lao army.

The Prime Minister agreed that Laos had undertaken an experiment; the reason it had succeeded, however, was because the Pathet Lao were not Communist. If they had been, they would have remained masters of the two provinces; instead they had abdicated their position and submitted to the Government's authority. Furthermore, the integration of the Pathet Lao into the national community had taken place without a single incident.

The Pathet Lao had always propagandized against the Royal Government as the "slave of the imperialists" and so forth, but now those propaganda themes were worthless because the Pathet Lao were themselves in the government.

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma said he had always thought the problem in Laos could not be settled until Viet-Nam was reunified, but he had been wrong. The fact that a settlement had been achieved proved the Pathet Lao had no secret accord with the Viet Minh, as his half-brother Prince Souphanouvong had sworn they did not. Souphanouvong had, moreover, told him that everything must be done to consolidate the throne. In reply the Prime Minister had said to the Pathet Lao leader that he must prove his words by deeds before the Lao would believe him.

Laos, continued the Prime Minister, was not in the same situation as Korea, Viet-Nam, and Germany. And so far as Central Europe was concerned, he had the impression that Rumania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia had become Communist because of the presence of the Soviet Army. The Soviet Army had left Finland, however, and Finland had remained free. He thought Laos could be compared to Finland.

Today Laos' National Army totaled 25,000, and, including the auto-defense forces, there were 40,000 men under arms. Souvanna Phouma was certain that the 1,500 Pathet Lao troops to be integrated could not undermine the Army and that the 200 Pathet Lao civil servants could not triumph over the 5,000–6,000 of the Royal Government.

Nevertheless, the necessary precautions had to be taken, and he had done so. Propaganda and intelligence organizations were going into the countryside to inform the people of their duty, and for the May elections the two conservative parties, the Nationalists and Independents, had in Saigon signed an agreement to cooperate.

The Prime Minister, because of special conditions obtaining in Laos, did not believe that a minority party, which had perhaps employed Marxist methods but was not dominated by Marxism, could absorb the majority. By birth he had much influence in the country, as did the Crown Prince. It was necessary to see the situation through Lao eyes. Dr. Dooley (head of a privately financed medical project), who had lived in the villages, could tell the United States that Laos could not become Communist because of its faith in the old traditions.

Souvanna Phouma asked the United States to have confidence, and to allow a three-to-four months' period to see whether he had been wrong in his judgment. He had not been wrong yet; many people, for example, thought the Pathet Lao would not respect the accords, but they had. Since 1956 he had considered the Pathet Lao true Lao. Laos did not wish to become Communist and would be the first to combat such a system.

The Secretary said one could not take much comfort from the fact that the Communist element in Laos might be a small minority, since the Communists always preferred to operate from a minority position. Stalin, in his discussions of Leninism, had stated the revolutionary party must always remain a minority because only a minority could be highly trained, disciplined, and efficient. A majority group became incompetent and the slave of mass opinion. Never in the world had the Communist Party become a majority; in the Soviet Union, for example, only 3 percent of the population belonged to the Party.

Finland, the Secretary continued, was the outstanding example of a nation which existed in close proximity to overwhelming Communist force and yet managed to preserve its freedom and independence, and all of us recognized the Finns' performance as one of the great achievements of modern times. They had long experience in dealing with the Russians, for even before the advent of the Communists they had had trouble. There was a quality about the Finns which we all greatly admired and respected. If Laos, without the experience of Finland, could match its performance, it would also be highly respected. He hoped Laos could do so, but thus far Finland was the exception rather than the rule.

The Secretary said that according to our information, only 4,000 Pathet Lao troops had presented themselves at the Assembly centers

rather than the 7,500 expected.[7] This might not be correct and perhaps did not justify drawing unfavorable conclusions, but it seemed to indicate that the Pathet Lao were not respecting the accords. The Communists were notorious violators of international agreements.

He then requested the correct interpretation of Article 2 of the Nationalist-Independent agreement on election tactics, which gave the impression the two parties would present more candidates than the number of available seats, thus splitting the conservative vote to the benefit of the leftists.

Souvanna Phouma, taking the Secretary's points in order, said he agreed the Communist minority could eventually dominate, but until the contrary was proven, he would not believe the Pathet Lao were really Communist. They used Communist methods, just as he had for three years in the Lao Issara movement in Bangkok, but this had not made him a Communist. During the pre-election period Pathet Lao propaganda could be scrutinized, but thus far it had not been of the Communist variety.

Laos had not had so much experience in dealing with Communism as had Finland, but conditions in Laos were different. Laos was the only country in Asia not providing fertile ground for Communism. Its Buddhism was strong, and it was underpopulated. Its population of 5,000,000[8] meant a density of only 20 per square kilometer. Moreover, the people lived in the traditions of the past; the women wove their own skirts, there was no industry, and the regime could be described as feudal. Laos was therefore impermeable to Communism.

In answering the Secretary's comment on the progress of integration, Ngon Sananikone, Minister of National Defense, said that of the 7,500 Pathet Lao to be integrated, 4,200 had been demobilized, and 1,500 were to be taken into the National Army, leaving 2,000 to be integrated by January 20. Many of the 2,000 were probably natives of the two provinces who would be demobilized on the spot.

On the Nationalist-Independent agreement, the Prime Minister said that each party would submit a list of candidates equal to the number of available seats in a district. A special committee would then examine the list to determine which candidates had the greatest chance of success, and by this process the number would be reduced.

Concerning monetary reform, the Prime Minister said that a priori he would not refuse to devalue, but a sudden devaluation would cause a rise in the cost of living, create conditions exploitable by Pathet Lao propagandists, and jeopardize the conservative cause in the May elec-

[7] Reported in telegram 1165 from Vientiane, January 10. (Department of State, Central Files, 033.51J11/1–1058; included in the microfiche supplement)

[8] No complete census has ever been taken in Laos, but U.S. Government agencies use 2,000,000, the Lao Statistical Service estimate. Top Lao officials are given to exaggeration on the population figure. [Footnote in the source text.]

tions. He therefore wished to postpone monetary reform until after the elections in order not to give the adversary a weapon to use against the Government.

Mr. Dillon responded that there was one element in the monetary situation which worried us so far as the elections were concerned. Any situation in which the currency was set at a rate far from its true value favored black-market conditions leading to scandals. We felt that such conditions might lend themselves to exploitation by the Pathet Lao during the campaign, and hoped something could be done before the elections to minimize this danger.

We did not, continued Mr. Dillon, foresee devaluation as causing a rise in prices, and we all agreed that such a result must be avoided. In the next day's talks we could discuss whether a price rise necessarily followed devaluation. Since the Prime Minister agreed to the idea of devaluation, only the principle needed to be mentioned here.

There was one other immediate problem for us in connection with monetary reform: Aid to Laos interested the Congress, which had the power of appropriation. Unless we could give assurances to the legislature, we would have a difficult time of it. The matter of timing was important, for the hearings on the aid program would be held in April and May. We must convince the Congress, which was an independent branch of the Government, that our proposal for aid to Laos was right. And the Congress was very concerned about Laos.

Concluding the meeting, the Secretary said that, since discussions were to continue the next day, perhaps all that had to be said here was that from our standpoint it was indispensable that something be done to remedy the situation, to meet our problem and at the same time minimize the difficulties in Laos. The Secretary hoped that some progress could be achieved while the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance were in Washington.

The meeting ended at 4:00 p.m.

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160. Editorial Note

At 10 p.m. on January 13, Souvanna Phouma and Deputy Under Secretary of State Dillon met at the Lao Embassy in Washington for a private discussion. No memorandum of conversation of the meeting was made, but Dillon gave a report on the discussion at the Secretary's Staff Meeting on January 14, 9:15 a.m. as follows:

"Mr. Dillon said that he had had quite a satisfactory meeting yesterday with the Laotian Prime Minister at the latter's request. Mr. Dillon surmised that the Prime Minister wanted to talk to him privately about monetary abuses in Laos out of earshot of his colleagues. The Prime Minister said he was strongly in favor of some currency revaluation and indicated that he was aware of the serious monetary abuses and wanted to do something to correct them." (SM N–601; Department of State, Conference Files: Lot 62 D 181, CF 957)

At 10:30 a.m. on January 14, Souvanna Phouma and his party met with President Eisenhower and Department of State officials. Souvanna thanked Eisenhower for U.S. aid and the President congratulated him on the "Lao decision to defend their liberty." According to the account of the meeting, the conversation was short and dealt only with generalities. (Memorandum of conversation by Charles Sedgwick and Byrne, January 14; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, International Series, Laos)

Also on January 14, Souvanna called on Vice President Nixon at the Senate office building at 11:15 a.m. The conversation was more substantive than that with Eisenhower. Nixon stressed that while Laos had friends in the U.S. Congress, the inefficient use of U.S. aid and past abuses in Vientiane made it difficult to sell a program of Lao aid to Congress. (Memorandum of conversation by Sedgwick and Byrne, January 14; Department of State, Central Files, 033.51J11/1–1458)

At 3:30 p.m. on January 14, Souvanna Phouma and his party returned to the Department of State for substantive discussions on monetary reform. Assistant Secretary Robertson informed the Lao officials that future aid to Laos depended on reform of the unrealistic official Lao exchange rate of 35 kip to the dollar and elimination of the system of import licensing which led to diversion of U.S. aid goods to Thailand. Souvanna Phouma and Minister of Finance Leaum Insisiengmay expressed concern that the United States was asking for devaluation, which would have serious political, social, and economic consequences just before the upcoming Lao elections. Both sides expressed willingness to work out a solution during subsequent meetings of experts in Washington. (Memorandum of conversation by William H. Price, January 14; *ibid.*) A summary paper of February 28 by Jan Mladek, the U.S. expert on the question, contains an account of the subsequent experts' discussions. (*Ibid.*, 851J.13/2–2558)

On the next day, January 15, at 10:30 a.m., Souvanna and his party met with Deputy Secretary of Defense Donald Quarles and Assistant Secretary of Defense Mansfield Sprague as well as other U.S. officials. According to a brief memorandum of conversation by Kocher, dated January 15, apart from amenities and "a most general discus-

sion" of the Pathet Lao and their integration into the Lao National Army, Souvanna Phouma made three requests of Deputy Secretary Quarles as follows:

"1. A squadron of American helicopters under French control, which were formerly used in Saigon, will apparently be taken out of service in a short time. The Prime Minister indicated that these helicopters could be extremely useful in the forthcoming election campaign for propaganda leaflets and other political purposes.

"2. The material at the disposition of the Laos Army was very old, clothing, ordnance, vehicles—many of them thrice rebuilt. It would be much appreciated if the possibility of providing newer material could be studied. (Captain Robbins confirmed in general the age and condition of ANL equipment.)

"3. The Prime Minister emphasized the inconvenience of army planning under the present system of supplying credits month-by-month. Deputy Secretary Quarles indicated his understanding of the ineffectiveness of planning on such a haphazard basis.

"Deputy Secretary Quarles promised to have his people look into these questions and to provide answers as soon as possible for the Prime Minister. The meeting broke up after the Deputy Secretary had given a general briefing of the world situation in military terms." (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–1558)

At noon, Souvanna Phouma met with Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles prior to a 1 p.m. lunch with him at the Alibi Club in Washington. No record of the meeting with Allen Dulles has been found.

There was a final formal meeting between Souvanna and Secretary Dulles to discuss the issuing of a joint communiqué of the visit. (Memorandum of conversation by Byrne, January 15; *ibid.*, 611.51J/1–1558) The communiqué is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, February 3, 1958, page 168.

The documents described here are included in the microfiche supplement.

161. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, January 15, 1958[1]

SUBJECT

Monetary Reform in Laos

PARTICIPANTS

Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prime Minister of Laos
Ngon Sananikone, Minister of National Defense, Laos
Tiao Souk, Minister of Public Works, Laos
Leaum Insisiengmay, Minister of Finance, Laos
Ourot Souvannavong, Ambassador of Laos
Mr. Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs
Ambassador J. Graham Parsons
Mr. Eric Kocher, Deputy Director, Office of Southeast Asian Affairs

After the final meeting between the Lao Prime Minister and the Secretary, Mr. Robertson met privately with the Lao Delegation. He inquired whether he had understood correctly that the Lao Prime Minister had stated at the end of the conference with the Secretary that monetary reform in Laos would be put into effect *after* the forthcoming elections in May. When Souvanna nodded agreement with this interpretation, Mr. Robertson stated that he wished to stress once again that before he went before the Congress to support the aid program for Laos we would have to have an agreement in effect on a realistic effective exchange rate. Only the previous evening at a dinner at the Laos Embassy Admiral Arleigh Burke had told him that in a meeting with Senator Russell, on naval matters, the Senator had returned again and again in his conversation to the monetary problem in Laos. Russell was one of the most influential Senators; he was in opposition to the entire aid program and could use the case of Laos to attack this whole program. Mr. Robertson stressed that this was one more evidence of an alert Congress which intended to scrutinize all aid requests most carefully this year. Without reform in Laos the outlook appeared dark for that country.

The Prime Minister indicated his understanding of our Congressional problem. At the same time, he stressed that any monetary reform which caused serious economic consequences in Laos before this spring's elections would have a disastrous political effect. Mr. Robertson recognized the urgency of both problems—the Lao political one, and ours involving Congressional demand for progress in monetary reform. Our aim is the same as the Lao, and both of us must now search for a reform which will take into consideration the problems of

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/1-1558. Secret. Drafted by Kocher and concurred in by Robertson.

the two countries. Mr. Robertson stated that he could not believe that we lacked the resourcefulness and wisdom to find a solution which took care of both points of view.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister stated his agreement with Mr. Robertson's statement and indicated that from Paris he would be able to keep in constant touch with the negotiations in which his Minister of Finance would participate next week here in Washington. He reiterated that Minister Leuam would have full authority to conclude an agreement in Washington.

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162. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Dillon)[1]

Washington, January 24, 1958.

SUBJECT

Special Assistance Funds for Laos

As you will recall from our discussions during the recent visit here of Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma of Laos, the May elections in that country are of vital importance for its future. If the Pathet Lao, who will be participating for the first time as a legal political party, win a significant number of the 21 National Assembly seats at issue, the Communists would be well on the way toward achieving their objective of taking over the entire country; if, on the other hand, the Government is victorious in the great majority of districts, the Communists would suffer a setback from which they would require a long time to recover.

Ambassador Parsons has recommended that we immediately undertake a crash program of village-level political impact projects to make the villagers aware of 1) the Royal Government's concern with their problems and 2) the reality of American aid.[2] Such a program would do much to counter the anticipated vigorous Communist cam-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/1-3158. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Byrne and cleared by Kocher, Jones, Robertson, Saccio, and Barnes (U/MSA) in draft.

[2] Recommended in telegram 1114 from Vientiane, January 3. The telegram was signed by Chargé Bacon, but it had been read in draft by Ambassador Parsons before he left for the United States. (*Ibid.*, 033.51J11/1-358; included in the microfiche supplement)

paign in the villages and the increasingly widespread criticism that American aid benefits the few in the cities and is largely unknown to the rural population.

Examples of the projects envisaged are the drilling of wells in drought areas, bulldozing of simple roads linking villages, construction of school buildings, repair of pagodas, and the provision of medical aid and training facilities. Each project would be examined in terms of its immediate and tangible political advantages in a particular situation, would make maximum use of local resources and labor, and would be relatively inexpensive. A $500,000 fund would cover the cost of 1) two additional Operation Brotherhood teams for six months and 2) other village-level projects over the next few months, both in the period before the elections and for a sufficient time afterward to insure that the effects of the program on the public mind were lasting.

Although ICA does not normally engage in activities like repairing pagodas, all the proposed projects further Mutual Security Program objectives. The USOM in Laos could not, however, get this sort of program under way within the time available, and need is urgent, for there remain but three months before the May 4 elections.

Consequently, Ambassador Parsons has recommended that the $500,000 fund be established for use at his discretion as specific needs arise, the disbursement to be handled [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on a voucher basis. Such a system would permit projects to be undertaken quickly, would bypass the obstacles which the Pathet Lao Minister of Planning might place in our path if the usual aid procedures were followed, [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*].

I agree with the Ambassador's recommendation. The proposal has also been discussed with Dr. Moyer of ICA, who concurs.

Recommendations

1. That you sign the attached memorandum to the Director of the International Cooperation Administration requesting that $500,000 from the Special Assistance Fund be allocated for Laos on the foregoing basis.[3]

2. That you telephone Mr. Smith to inform him that this memorandum is on its way to him and that in view of the urgency of the situation you hope action can be taken within the next two or three days.

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[3] A copy of the memorandum to James H. Smith, Jr., drafted on January 24, is in Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 361 Hardy Hearings 1959. In the memorandum, Dillon requested approval of a $500,000 authorization from the Special Assistance Fund and presented arguments similar to those in the memorandum above. ICA agreed [*2 lines of text not declassified*].

163. Memorandum for the Files by the Second Secretary of the Embassy in Laos (Dean)[1]

Vientiane, February 11, 1958.

SUBJECT

Policy regarding United States Financial and Material Support in the Forthcoming Elections

Following is [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] thinking regarding U.S. financial and material support in the forthcoming elections:

A. Purpose

1. To limit to the very minimum new Neo Lao Hak Xat and additional Santiphab representation in the new Assembly.

2. Objective No. 1 does not require the U.S. to favor openly one anti-PL candidate over another. It is assumed that Independents and Nationalists will select the strongest candidate to run on the National Front ticket.

3. U.S. support being used as leverage to reduce the number of conservative candidates to the number of seats at stake, thereby avoiding that the U.S. finances more than one conservative candidate for one seat; any other system implies that U.S. aid is cancelled out.

B. Tactics

1. According to official Min Interior information, 106 candidates have registered for the 21 seats at stake. Of 106 candidates, 21 are Neo Lao Hak Xat or followers of Bong, leaving 85 conservatives disputing 21 seats. The ratio of 4 to 1 is misleading, since in certain provinces conservatives have reduced the number of candidates to the number of seats available (Xieng Khouang and probably Attopeu).

2. On February 8, Nationalists and Independents formed a central committee to select the National Front candidates. The ideal situation would be brought about if (a) Independents and Nationalists can agree on National Front candidates for each province and (b) can persuade other candidates to withdraw.

3. U.S. financial assistance will be turned over in two installments to the central committee of the National Front for each candidate the Independents and Nationalists agree on to endorse as the National Front candidate. For example: If U.S. aid amounts to 250,000 kip per candidate, then for each candidate the Independents and Nationalists

[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 84, Vientiane Embassy Files: FRC 63 A 172, 350 Laos, Political Affairs—Elections. Secret; Limited Distribution.

can agree on, the U.S. will at once credit the central committee of the National Front with 125,000 kip.[2] An equal amount will be turned over during the last stage of the electoral campaign. [*5½ lines of source text not declassified*]

[*3 paragraphs (20 lines of source text) not declassified*]

[2] According to a memorandum of conversation by Dean, February 17, he informed Oun Heuan on February 17 that the United States would turn over 2.1 million kip to the National Front to support its 21 candidates (100,000 per candidate). Dean continued that more money would be forthcoming on April 1, provided the candidates not endorsed by the National Front withdrew. (Enclosure to February 20 memorandum by Dean; Washington National Records Center, RG 84, Vientiane Embassy Files: FRC 63 A 172, 350 Laos, Political Affairs—Elections, Jan. to May 1958; included in the microfiche supplement)

164. Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Stump) to the Chief, Program Evaluation Office, Laos (Brown)[1]

Honolulu, February 13, 1958—3:15 p.m.

0011/0027. Ref my 062345Z Jan 58[2] and Quarterly Activities Report, PEO, Laos dtd 20 Jan 58.[3] Recent conferences with CHPEO and my staff have been most helpful towards increasing understanding of problems in Laos. Obviously the most immediate problem is to win May elections and set stage for winning general elections in 1959. From discussions which Chief PEO the Communists appear to be waging a vigorous, coordinated, and well financed campaign. Meanwhile indications are that the Nationalist Party is not conducting a vigorous, well planned campaign, either because they lack the means, the knowhow, or they underestimate the Communist threat.

I consider that the most important and immediate goal must be to assist the RLG in winning these special elections. The situation appears to me to be at a stage where the US can no longer adhere to a policy of "wait and see" but must take immediate and bold action. This action will require that the country team with full support from

[1] Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) (2). Top Secret. Dispatched with date/time group 140115Z. Repeated to the CNO.

[2] Dated January 7. (Enclosure to letter from Admiral Burke to Robertson; Department of State, EA/Laos Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1958; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Not found.

higher authorities act in concert in order to be effectively felt from top RLG officials to the grass roots. Attainment of this goal is of fundamental importance to future US actions and to Laos itself.

In order to achieve our longer range goal, but in no way to detract from the urgency of winning these elections, we must plan for the following objectives in the future:

A. Removal of the ICC from Laos subsequent to May elections.
B. Enactment of security legislation which will enable reduction of Communism in Laos.
C. Reduction in Communist infiltration.
D. Establishment of regular MAAG group to continue building a security force.
E. Development of a country socio-economic plan which can be executed to create a stable progressive society in Laos.

Planning to achieve these objectives should be underway in Laos, here, and in Washington. None of these will be possible, however, if the Communists win significant strength in the elections. To assist the country team I am prepared to recommend to Washington that the following be given consideration as a basis for immediate US courses of action to support the RLG:

A. Additional qualified planners and administrative personnel be made available to the Ambassador and the country team from Washington and my staff as necessary on a temporary basis. Since shortage of qualified personnel is a major obstacle to the implementation of US policy and programs in Laos, this would close the gap during this crucial period pending improved recruiting and training actions. Such augmentation should assist country team to plan and execute necessary actions.
B. The country team must have the resources to persuade Nationalist Party to establish a single slate of candidates especially in areas of doubtful outcome.
C. We should provide transportation to selected Nationalist Party candidates for use in specific areas. Air transportation and particularly helicopters would be most useful. Commercial means should be used if possible. CAT Airlines is a possibility and there may be others which could be used. If necessary US military helicopters could be [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] flown by contract pilots on a commercial contract basis.
D. We should provide through USOM the means whereby the Nationalist Party can conduct a well organized dynamic political campaign throughout Laos. Essentially this will require campaign advisors, trained propagandists, printing and reproduction facilities and portable public address systems together with the necessary transport to insure grass roots campaigning. Personnel from Southeast Asia area experienced in political action should be utilized to the maximum. Commercial facilities and equipment could be primary sources of required services. Additional facilities under US control in Manila and US Army psywar units should be utilized to the maximum feasible.

E. The US should expand the civic action program immediately. This returns a large dividend for a relatively small investment and is something we can do at once. This requires:

(1) Allocation of necessary money.

(2) Trained personnel for the working level. MAAGs and Embassies in area would be possible source.

(3) Food, clothing, medicine. MAP and military as well as commercial sources should be utilized as feasible.

F. Every opportunity should be utilized to advise and assist the RLG thru other US personnel [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in Laos. While these personnel are not numerous they exert a tremendous influence and are strongly anti-Communistic. Some are in critical areas.

I am fully aware that there are broad implications to some of the foregoing. I realize that the ICC, the Geneva accords, the French and our own red tape are obstacles which must be surmounted. In so far as I am authorized I am prepared to expedite implementation of program in Laos. I have within Pacific Command substantial capability and supplies which could be used provided I have proper authorization. The US has already expended over 130 million dollars in Laos. We run the risk of losing this investment if we lose Laos directly or indirectly as a result of May elections. The security of Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Thailand will then be much more endangered and thereby costly. The May elections are critical and the RLG must be advised, persuaded, and assisted to win. I am convinced that we must take positive action to preserve Laos now and to create opportunities for reducing Communism in Laos in the near future. Please discuss this with Ambassador and submit comments and/or recommendations to me relative to the points mentioned herein or others that may come up.

165. Letter From the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Dillon) to the Director of Central Intelligence (Dulles)[1]

Washington, February 15, 1958.

DEAR MR. DULLES: As you are aware, the May 4, 1958 elections in Laos are of vital concern to the United States, since for the first time the Communist-controlled Pathet Lao will contest these elections as a legal political party with a country-wide overt and covert apparatus. If the Pathet Lao win a significant number of the 21 National Assembly seats at issue, the Communists would be well on the way toward achieving their objective of taking over the entire country; if, on the other hand, the Government succeeds in the great majority of districts, the Communists would suffer a serious setback from which they would require a long time to recover.

To assist the conservatives in these elections, we believe [*1 line of source text not declassified*] that we should undertake an emergency program of village-level political impact projects to increase the villagers' awareness of 1) the Royal Government's concern with their problems and 2) the reality of American aid. Such a program would do much to counter the expected vigorous Communist campaign in the villages and the growing criticism that American aid benefits the few in the cities and fails to reach the rural population.

Examples of the projects envisaged are the drilling of wells in drought areas, bulldozing of simple roads linking villages, construction of school buildings, repair of pagodas, and the addition of two Operation Brotherhood teams. Each project would be examined in terms of its immediate and tangible political advantages in a particular situation, would make maximum use of local resources and labor, and would be relatively inexpensive. While the primary emphasis would be on the enhancement of conservative chances in the May elections, the program would continue for a sufficient period after the elections to insure a lasting favorable effect on the public mind.

[*3 paragraphs (29 lines of source text) and footnote (3 lines of text) not declassified*]

Sincerely yours,

C. Douglas Dillon[2]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751G.5–MSP/2–1558. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Byrne and cleared by Kocher and Jones and Burn (U/MSA) and Ohly (ICA) in draft. [*3½ lines of text not declassified*]

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

166. Telegram From the Chief of the Program Evalution Office, Laos (Brown) to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Stump)[1]

Vientiane, February 25, 1958—6:47 a.m.

2862/3005. Cite PEO 223–58 from Brown. Ref DTG 140115Z.[2]

1. During Ambassador Parsons' Jan visit stateside he was granted special fund of $500,000 to be used at his discretion to enhance conservative chances in forthcoming election.

2. Utilizing these funds, the country team is starting a crash program of village level political impact projects to increase village awareness of RLG concern with their problems and the reality of American aid. Types of projects envisaged as follows: Digging wells in drought areas; a visit of two Operation Brotherhood teams; construction of small irrigation dams; minor road construction; furnishing materials for construction of school houses; provision of publicity equipment, projectors, printing of election material for conservative candidates; provision and staffing of a political campaign headquarters and a network of provincial coordinators to assist conservative candidates and, in particular, to supply their material requirements.

3. The ANL is being directed by RLG to consider the support of civic action its primary mission. Regional commanders through the volunteer battalions have been instructed to back up civic action to the fullest extent possible. Auto-defense units will also be utilized to their maximum capability.

4. The country team believes that CINCPAC could materially assist in carrying out the above pre-election program by furnishing the following personnel and material: 1 qualified planner and 1 individual particularly qualified in the psychological aspects of political campaigning against the Communists to be furnished Chief, PEO as soon as possible and to remain until the election period is over. 8 additional end use observers with proper knowledge of the French language and conditions in Southeast Asia to be furnished Chief, PEO during the pre-election period. Chief PEO also requests immediate authority to expand the auto-defense program to a strength of 16,000. The auto-defense program can be furnished necessary blankets, salt, rations and so forth from army stocks. Requisitions will be submitted to cover replacement of items used in this program. A minimum fleet of 6 H–19 helicopters complete with pilots, maintenance personnel and spare parts backup should be furnished as soon as possible.

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[1] Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 (8–22–46) (2). Top Secret. Dispatched from USARMA Vientiane with date/time group 242347Z Feb 58. At CINCPAC, this telegram was renumbered as 252117Z Feb and sent for information to CGUSAFPAC, CNO, CGUSARPAC, and CINCPACFLT.

[2] Printed as telegram 0011/0027, Document 164.

Helcopters to operate under [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] a commercial contract. Additional radios may be required by the ANL. The type and number of sets required will be forwarded in a separate message.[3] Emergency requisitions for engineer spare parts may also be required. Break the deadlock on furnishing POL to ANL so that a supply of POL will be available and can be distributed to all ANL units supporting the pre-election campaign. Without POL ANL cannot function. Authorize Chief PEO to expend not to exceed 25,000 US dollars for additional CAT aircraft to support ANL in pre-election campaign.

5. With full backing by CINCPAC as indicated above, and with full cooperation by all other agencies in Southeast Asia, the country team feels that a major effort can still be made in Laos, provided action is taken quickly, which will have a definite positive impact on the political campaign in orienting it toward the election of conservative or pro-West candidates.

[3] Not found.

167. Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Stump) to the Chief of Naval Operations (Burke)[1]

Honolulu, February 27, 1958—7:15 a.m.

3726. Ref: A. CINCPAC 140115Z.[2] B. USARMA Vientiane 242347Z pasep.[3] C. CINCPAC 182103Z.[4] D. OSD 252227Z cite DEF 937566.[5]

[1] Source: National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48) (2). Top Secret. Dispatched with 270315Z Feb 58 date/time group. Repeated to CHPEO, CINCPACFLT, CINCUSARPAC, and CINCPACAF.

[2] Printed as telegram 0011/0027, Document 164.

[3] Also sent as PEO 223–58, February 25. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 (8–22–46) (2); included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In this telegram to OASD/ISA, February 18, CINCPAC requested emergency support for increasing Laos auto-defense strength. CINCPAC noted that support of auto-defense would "materially influence" the upcoming elections in Laos. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 Asia (6–28–48) (2); included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Not found.

1. CINCPAC assumes 500,000 dollar special fund has been made available to Chief of Mission, Laos for implementing crash program as outlined para 2 ref B. CINCPAC agrees with country team program and strongly recommends immediate action be taken to provide necessary backing to insure its success.

2. I concur in country team proposals contained in para 4 ref B and strongly recommend that they be approved on DOD level. I am prepared to initiate immediate action to assist CHPEO within my authority and resources. I am prepared, if authorization and necessary funding is arranged, to provide additional assistance as required. I recommend that the following action be undertaken immediately:

A. Qualified planner be provided CHPEO from my staff for pre-election period on temporary duty.

B. Individual qualified in psychological aspects of political campaigning against Communists be made available to CHPEO during pre-election period. Col Lansdale, USAF assigned DOD meets these qualifications. Recommend that he or individual of similar qualifications be assigned temporary duty Laos since no suitable individual available to PACOM.

C. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Request DOD action to effect agreement.

D. Ref C be amended to authorize immediate strength of 16,000 auto defense personnel with sum of $687,189 added to overseas internal security program for this contingency.

E. CINCPAC authorized emergency issue of blankets, sweaters, rice and salt from ANL stocks to auto defense personnel provided funds requested para 2D above approved so that replacement in kind can be effected.

F. Request emergency action to implement supply POL to Laos in consonance with ref D.

G. CINCPAC authorize CHPEO to utilize stand by contract with CAT for additional airlift as requested. Request authorization for additional $25,000 to cover this requirement.

H. Helos be made available to the RLG for use in pre-election campaigning. Six small helos should be provided from: (1) commercial sources, preferable, or (2) [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] military aircraft and will require urgent implementation to be of value, in view of time factor. CINCPAC considers the most feasible method to be through contract with CAT, authorized to subcontract as required, within monetary limitation as set by DOD for this purpose. CINCPAC is prepared to initiate action along this line as soon as authorized and to arrange airlift of helos and personnel as required.

3. On receipt of detailed requirement for engineering equipment and radios, CINCPAC will review PEO's requests and take such action as deemed appropriate in consideration of intended use of the item, stock available from PACOM sources and time required to supply in relation to impact on short range projects.

4. Non-payment of ANL troops for past month is cause for great concern. This force clearly constitutes primary element of anti-Communist power in Laos and must therefore be supported fully if it is to remain effective in critical days ahead. While need to institute monetary reform is appreciated as essential to economic progress, consider winning of election most vital current issue and immediate payment of ANL troops essential factor to this end. Understand from OSD 212230Z[6] that status of payment to ANL has been clarified.

5. It is recommended that immediate action be taken to:

A. Authorize CINCPAC to assist in Laos as requested herein.

B. Direct the military departments to expedite material and personnel support as may be requested by CINCPAC.[7]

6. CINCPAC component commands will be requested to assist as required.

7. For CHPEO Laos keep CHMAAGs Vietnam and Thailand informed essentials this project on need to know basis as required for necessary support.

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[6] Not found.

[7] In a memorandum to OASD/ISA, February 28, Burke recommended immediate action to implement the proposals in this telegram. (Enclosure to Note by the Secretaries to the JCS, March 6; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Records, CCS 092 Asia (6–25–48); included in the microfiche supplement)

168. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Whittington) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, March 14, 1958.

SUBJECT

Operation of the National Front in Laos

1. In connection with Vientiane's 1521[2] indicating that the Lao National Front is coming apart at the seams. [*5 lines of source text not declassified*].

[*2 lines of source text not declassified*] As of March 11 the hitherto defunct Central Committee was beginning to recognize the urgency of the situation. It had consequently organized provincial election committees headed by the Chaokhouengs in 10 provinces and the senior military commanders in Sam Neua and Phong Saly, and had proposed [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] a number of well-thought-out village political impact projects. Moreover, the plan to utilize the Crown Prince in the election campaign was jelling. The three countries supporting SIDASP had turned over their contributions for the election campaign, and SIDASP's program against Pathet Lao candidates was getting off the ground. [*2 lines of source text not declassified*]

[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] considered the foregoing information indicated the situation was not so bad as depicted in Vientiane's 1521, but that complacency was obviously not warranted. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]

So far as financial assistance is concerned, the time for use of this weapon has not arrived, inasmuch as April 1 is the scheduled date for whittling down the number of candidates to 21, which is our condition for handing over the remaining campaign funds.

We have agreed to examine the situation during the first part of next week in order to determine what further might be done.

2. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] believes it time to resume contact with Katay, who is apparently recovering relatively rapidly and is expected in Vientiane at the end of the month to take part in pre-election maneuvering. [*2 lines of source text not declassified*]

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350.01 Elections (Lao). Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Byrne.

[2] Telegram 1521 from Vientiane, March 11, was the third weekly report on the Lao electoral campaign. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/3–1158) The first and second weekly reports, telegrams 1378 and 1439 from Vientiane, February 19 and 28, are *ibid.*, 751J.00/2–1958 and 751J.00/2–2858. They are included in the microfiche supplement.

They do wish as a minimum objective to keep tab on Katay's activities and thinking, and as a maximum to obtain his collaboration with the National Front. [*2 lines of source text not declassified*]

Recommendation

That you approve resumption of contact with Katay along the general lines set forth above.[3]

[3] Parsons disapproved the recommendation. He wrote the following note after his disapproval: "I believe we should take another look at this at the end of the month when (1) Katay may or may not have come to Vte [Vientiane] and (2) funding crisis may or may not have been resolved. In any event I would much prefer for Katay (or a go-between on his behalf) to come to us rather than the reverse. J.G.P."

169. Editorial Note

As recommended by the Embassy in Vientiane in telegram 1114, January 3, and approved in Washington (Document 162), U.S. agencies in Laos began on March 31 a high-impact village aid program with the codeword "Operation Booster Shot." (Department of State, Central Files, 033.51J11/1–358) The operation consisted of a daily air-shuttle of supplies between Bangkok and Vientiane for use in the Lao civic action program in areas where the Royal Lao Government's political influence and popularity were considered weak. Because of the absence of roads in Laos, aid goods, tools, construction materials, rice, salt, and other staples were airdropped into key areas for the use of pro-government civic action teams. In Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces, "Operation Booster Shot" included the airdrop of two bulldozers plus related equipment to begin road construction projects.

A status of the Country Team's efforts in support of the Royal Lao Government's pre-election program, including "Operation Booster Shot," is in telegram 1685 from Vientiane, April 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–558)

Telegrams 1114 and 1685 are included in the microfiche supplement.

170. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, April 7, 1958—7:42 p.m.

1222. Your 1678.[2]

1. Indication reftel Souphanouvong planning use ICC as leverage improve NLHX chances, combined with intelligence report Souvanna Phouma desires election at least two NLHX candidates, most disturbing and raises serious question bona fides Souvanna's role in joint U.S.-Lao efforts elections. Should two candidates be Souphanouvong and Phoumi it would appear their retention in new Souvanna government intended regardless overall results elections.

2. U.S. acceptance deferral monetary negotiations until after elections and various U.S. arrangements support United Conservative Front intended build up RLG strength for all out effort defeat NLHX. Objective is not assure NLHX minimum representation Assembly but totally deny them such representation and inflict on them maximum loss prestige and influence, eliminating them from next government.

3. Request Embassy comments including any information available as result contact Nationalist and Independent leaders.[3] Embassy authorized in its discretion use substance paragraph 2 above in talks with them or Souvanna himself if deemed feasible query him on above report.

Dulles

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–458. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Corcoran, revised by Parsons, cleared by Whittington, and approved by Parsons.

[2] In telegram 1678, April 4, the Embassy reported that it learned that Souphanouvong now considered retention of the ICC after the May 4 elections necessary and that he was preparing a dossier of illegal Lao Government campaign activities against the NLHX for the ICC to investigate. (*Ibid.*)

[3] In telegram 1714 from Vientiane, April 11, Smith agreed that all NLHX candidates should be defeated in the elections, but concluded that the only way it could be done was by fraud and force which would be undesirable and possibly counterproductive. Smith suggested instead a joint Western effort in Vientiane to keep future NLHX Assembly members out of the next Lao Cabinet. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/4–1158; included in the microfiche supplement)

171. Editorial Note

The Department of State and the Country Team in Vientiane differed over the use of clearly-marked U.S. Air Force planes in "Operation Booster Shot," the U.S. airborne operation in support of the Royal Lao Government's pre-election program. Department of State officials became concerned that U.S. officials involved in the program were using planes marked as U.S. Air Force aircraft and were openly taking credit for the operation. (Telegram 1256 to Vientiane, April 16; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–1658)

The Embassy in Vientiane responded that USAF C–119 and C–130 aircraft were the only ones available in the area for an operation of the magnitude of "Operation Booster Shot." In any case, the Embassy believed that the United States was winning great psychological advantage from its participation in the operation. (Telegram 1742 from Vientiane, April 17; *ibid.*, 751J.00/4–1758) The Department of State reluctantly approved the continued use of USAF planes.

Nevertheless, the Department stated that the U.S. role in "Operation Booster Shot" should be played down as much as possible because of Asian sensibilities, potential nationalist resentment, and possible International Control Commission protests, and because it felt that the Royal Lao Government should get maximum credit for the program. The Department suggested also that the airlift not end immediately after the election, but taper off. (Telegram 1267 to Vientiane April 18; *ibid.*) The Embassy agreed and stated that it would continue airdrops of additional supplies and equipment until the rains, which usually came around May 15. The remaining airdrops would be carried out by non-USAF planes. The Embassy also agreed that the Royal Lao Government should get maximum credit for the airlift. (Telegram 1811 from Vientiane, April 26; *ibid.*, 751J.00/4–2658)

All the telegrams described are included in the microfiche supplement.

172. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, May 5, 1958.

SUBJECT

Item for Secretary's Staff Meeting: May 4 elections in Laos[2]

Supplementary elections to fill 21 seats in the National Assembly were held Sunday in Laos. Complete election returns will probably not be known until about May 14. The new enlarged Assembly is not expected to convene effectively before May 20. Then it will invest a new government. Souvanna Phouma seems tired and would like a rest but he can probably succeed himself without difficulty unless Katay really wants the job and has recovered sufficiently to take it. We hope the Neo Lao Hak Sat (Communists) will be excluded from the new cabinet but if they make a strong showing in the elections it will be hard to keep them out. The best estimate still is that they will win from 4 to 6 seats.

Our Embassy notes that the Lao National Army, formerly a non-political body, has emerged during the campaign as an active political force that will have to be reckoned with hereafter.

For a while the NLHS was getting away with presenting itself as a patriotic element while the conservatives were reluctant to brand it openly as a Communist tool. Its excessive claims during the campaign however provoked the conservatives into pinning the Communist label on the NLHS and attacking it for its ties with Hanoi and Peiping.

Communist complaints of army strong arm tactics may possibly cause the ICC to stay on after the elections despite the Royal Government's request that it withdraw.

The accelerated program of U.S. village aid was appreciated by the population but it is difficult to estimate its effect on the elections. The program was concentrated in those areas most infected by Communist propaganda. If the NLHS makes a poor showing in those areas the village aid program will deserve credit.

Our Embassy feels that if the conservatives win one of the two seats at stake in Sam Neua and Phong Saly, provinces long under Communist domination, this success might have repercussions outside Laos. This is the first time a population formerly under Communist

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350.01 Elections (Lao). Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared by Parsons.

[2] This summary report was based on telegram 1851 from Vientiane, May 2, the eighth and last weekly report on the electoral campaign in Laos. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/5–258; included in the microfiche supplement)

control is being permitted to vote freely. Should the people openly repudiate a Communist candidate the "Lao formula" might set a precedent for the unification of other divided countries. This formula requires that political and military settlements be reached and a coalition government arbitrarily formed before elections are held. The Vietnamese Communists have already proposed the Lao formula to Ngo dinh Diem as an example. The Embassy points out that the attractiveness of this formula in other divided countries would obviously depend on each side's estimate of its own chances of electoral success.[3]

[3] In telegram 1901 from Vientiane, May 11, Smith informed Robertson and Parsons that the NLHX and the allied Santiphab party would probably win 10–14 of the 21 seats up for election. Smith blamed conservative Lao politicians for failure to heed U.S. warnings about the seriousness of the Pathet Lao threat and their inability to join together in a unified slate. Smith suggested that the surprising political strengthen of the NLHX required an "urgent reappraisal of the U.S. effort in Laos." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–1158; included in the microfiche supplement)

173. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 15, 1958—7:41 p.m.

1382. Embtels 1901[2] and 1925.[3] Dept appreciates full reporting elections and reactions Lao leaders and others thereto; awaits your recommendations future U.S. courses of action. In meantime views Dept as follows:

1) Remains as true as always withdrawal U.S. aid from Laos would virtually guarantee swift submergence within Communist bloc; this would have critically serious repercussions elsewhere in SEA.

2) Equally true Souphanouvong and NLHX are instruments world Communism which would be prime beneficiary U. S. withdrawal.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–1358. Top Secret. Drafted by Parsons, cleared by Kocher and Robertson, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Paris, London, Saigon, Bangkok, and Phnom Penh.

[2] See footnote 3, *supra*.

[3] In telegram 1925, May 13, Smith reported a 2-hour conversation with Crown Prince Savang on the morning of May 13. According to Smith, Savang believed that the vote in Laos was not a vote for Communism, but rather a vote against corruption and war. Savang asked for unequivocal statements from both the United States and SEATO that they would help Laos to maintain its independence against the Communist threat as a means of rallying anti-Communist elements in the country. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–1358; included in the microfiche supplement)

3) Yet lamentable performance Lao conservatives, particularly in failing unite on restricted slate candidates has seriously impaired our capability defend continuance Lao program. Monetary reform is all more urgent necessity to help root out corruption.

4) Among difficult tasks ahead are (a) how to convince French in Laos base their actions on above truths (b) how to get Lao publicly brand NLHX as agents world Communism and unite in effective struggle defeat them.

5) Problem Lao leadership is critical. We agree present leaders have failed heed U.S. warnings adequately and elections on May 4 proved we were right and they were wrong as well as negligent, self-seeking or worse. We see little hope in trying to work through Katay, Souvanna or even Phoui and given current Congressional storm against aid abuses Laos it is question whether programs based on support of old leaders could win approval. Souvanna's vain assurances Washington well remembered and he is discredited here.

6) Intensive search therefore required for "new faces" with whom people not disillusioned and who have energy and courage to carry struggle into remote villages and minority tribal areas. Preliminary thought here is that such persons as Col. Oudone Sananikone, Col. Ouane, Nouphat Sisouk and possibly Dr. Oudom might form nucleus of group with whom we could work. View of Crown Prince on this would be helpful; also whether he would consider cooperating such group and persuading them work with you.

7) Tasks of such group would include a) action in Assembly during impending government crisis; b) development of political action, propaganda and "aid to people" programs for period leading up to late 1959 elections (which for moment we assume will be held as Constitution requires).

On Assembly action we would like your views whether group acting under Savang's guidance could organize out of Nationalist and Independent plus other non-Communist members new united party from which top three discredited leaders would be excluded at least as regards active participation. Party program would be built around anti-corruption and aid-to-people drive and would in foreign affairs espouse united, neutral, independent Laos. Cabinet would of course exclude NLHX; likewise desirable exclude such unreliable opportunists as Bong unless they are demonstrably committed as reformists.

8) We agree with Embtel 1901 that continuance present government in office would best serve Souphanouvong's purpose and would render yet more grave present danger to Laos. We do not however see any great advantage to another Katay–Phoui reconciliation and therefore our view that Souvanna should resign rests more on hope that new leadership could be thrust forward than that old leadership could be rehabilitated. Should not be overlooked that (a) French will never

join with us in backing Katay and (b) Katay who has had almost unbroken record as political liability since mid-1956 has now been rebuffed even in Pakse supposed center of his power. We also have grave doubts re Petsarath but recognize his views and attitude important factor in situation. It does not appear to us Sihanouk has anything to contribute to stability of Laos considering degree of Communist penetration already accomplished Cambodia.

9) While agreeing with Savang that May 4 vote was not indication Lao people want Communism it is not necessary for them to be Communists or to want Communism in order to get it. We can also see merit in statement which Crown Prince desires (Para 4, Embtel 1925) but such statement difficult for us at this juncture and perhaps not desirable until Lao have taken some concrete step under his leadership to show they will face up to what he calls completely new political situation. We would take same view of SEATO statement particularly if new group suggested para 5 above desired it. In other words burden of proof is on Lao first to show that conditions exist for our help to achieve their and our objective.

10) You authorized in your discretion discuss foregoing with Crown Prince.

Dulles

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174. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, May 17, 1958.

SUBJECT

Preliminary Analysis of Lao Election Results

Although firm final results have not yet been announced it may be safely assumed that the Communists (Neo Lao Hak Xat) have won nine seats and that the neutralists (Santiphab) have won four out of the twenty-one seats at issue in the May 4 supplementary elections in Laos. Since there are eight leftists in the National Assembly already, a leftist coalition may be expected to control about one-third of the seats in the new enlarged assembly (21 out of 59 seats).

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–1758. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared by Kocher and Parsons. A note on the source text indicates that the Secretary saw this memorandum.

We are awaiting an analysis of the election results that is being prepared by the Embassy but from information already received it seems clear that a new political situation has evolved in Laos as a result of these elections. The Crown Prince, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma and the French representative in Vientiane claim that the unexpectedly strong showing of the Communist candidates does not indicate a choice of Communism by the Lao electorate but simply a protest vote against war and corruption and in favor of peace, neutrality and new faces. This argument which contains some elements of truth cannot, however, obscure the fact that the Neo Lao Hak Xat has emerged as a well organized and disciplined legal political party whose aim is to establish Communist control of Laos, probably by parliamentary means.

The conservative leaders have been badly shaken by the Communist show of strength. Unfortunately their first reaction is simply to blame each other for the mistake they all made in failing to produce a workable united front with a minimum list of conservative candidates. Figures now available indicate that conservatives received three-quarters of the popular vote but will get only one-third of the seats at issue. Partial returns show that in ten provinces where eighty per cent of the electorate voted, conservatives got 680,370 votes but will get only eight seats whereas leftists got only 256,010 votes but will get thirteen seats.

It appears that the Neo Lao Hak Xat intend to try to relieve the conservatives' anxieties and to lull them into a false sense of security which will make a conservative merger less likely. To this end Communist Prince Souphanouvong is suggesting a perpetuation of the present government with its two Neo Lao Hak Xat members and is volunteering for the unpopular task of participation in the monetary negotiations with the United States. There appears to be a growing acceptance in some conservative circles of the Neo Lao Hak Xat proposal for continuation of the present cabinet. We feel that this formula would cause the conservatives again to lapse into dangerous complacency and thus prevent their unification.

It is possible for the conservatives, given a little organization and discipline and reasonably effective leadership, to form an all conservative government. They have a majority of the enlarged assembly and they possess the psychological advantage of having received a popular majority in the elections.

We are now discussing with the Embassy in Vientiane various possibilities related to a reappraisal of our efforts in Laos.[2]

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[2] In telegram 1960 from Vientiane, May 17, the Embassy concluded that the NLHX was now the strongest political party in Laos and listed the reasons for electoral success. The Embassy warned of a possible peaceful Communist takeover in Laos in the general election of December 1959 and concluded its analysis with the suggestion that either a

Continued

175. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 19, 1958—5 p.m.

1965. CINCPAC for POLAD. Reference: Embtel 1960.[2]

A. Requirements to accomplish US objectives of keeping Laos from Communist domination.

Conservatives must win general elections in eighteen months. To do so Embassy convinced they will have to:

(1) Form Government excluding NLHZ while obtaining support of all other parties and most if not all unaffiliated deputies;

(2) Create single strong national Conservative party grouping all non-NLHZ elements which is organized fully at village level and can effectively counter NLHZ organization at all levels;

(3) Include in Cabinet personalities who are honest, forceful and determined to carry through reform program;

(4) Bring benefits Western aid effectively to even most distant villages to satisfy insofar as possible basic needs of population;

(5) Develop administrative infrastructure of nation so that central government, through its civil servants and officials reaches into most remote villages. Failure of government to "administer" nation effectively has created vacuum which NLHZ has been working hard to try to fill.

(6) Promptly carry through monetary reform to eliminate source of corruption and ensure, without unnecessary inflationary pressure, availability of kip required to provide framework for sound economic development. Such a measure now more essential than ever to "purify" morals of governing class.

B. Embassy recommendations.

1. Broadly based Conservative cabinet—without NLHZ participation—combination of Independent-Nationalists, Independent-Nationalists-Democrats, or Independents-Nationalists-Democrats-Bong—would satisfy our first requirement. Embassy believes broadest base, i.e. inclusion Bong, would be most stable combination, because it would give cabinet widest margin of support in Assembly and because inclusion of Bong and Democrats would prevent them from joining opposition.

2. Immediate creation broadest Conservative front in Assembly to support Conservative cabinet and early merger of all Conservative parties—while Embassy recognizes that Conservative leadership is

cabinet crisis, dissolution of the Assembly, and new elections were possibilities, but an immediate military coup was not. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/5–1758; included in the microfiche supplement)

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–1958. Secret; Priority. Repeated to Paris, London, Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

tainted and offers small hope for dynamic government, nevertheless fact is that system is parliamentarian, that parties do exist, that certain well-known politicians who may be unpalatable to US do control majority of votes in Assembly, and that to weld these parties their leaders must first be reconciled and cannot be by-passed under present circumstances. Therefore, immediate objective appears to be creation broadest Conservative front in Assembly to support Conservative cabinet. As a practical matter, achievement this objective requires first a Phoui–Katay rapprochement. Eventually, however, Embassy considers that Conservative front can only be maintained through complete merger of all Conservative parties and that such merger should become primary objective US policy, toward attainment of which maximum influence should be brought to bear. Less than that can only lead to weakness and division in Conservative ranks.

3. Inclusion of new men as secretaries of state in certain key ministries—practically, it should be expected that Conservative parties will not be able to merge before they are confronted by necessity of forming new cabinet and that therefore choice of ministers will be matter of haggling between parties. This haggling will result in most ministers being chosen for their political positions rather than for their effectiveness and/or honesty.

Once principle of unified Conservative cabinet agreed to, however, Embassy believes we might seek to have younger, more energetic new men included as secretaries state in certain key ministries.

4. As explained in detail in paragraph 6 Embtel 1901,[3] inclusion one or more NLHZ ministers in cabinet would offer NLHZ great opportunities: Ministers in government could claim credit for work accomplished by their ministries (i.e., Phoumi heading Ministry of Cult) and even by government, while party in Assembly could assume role of righteous opposition on popular issues to block work other ministries. Furthermore, presence NLHZ ministries within cabinet would very probably hinder government assuming energetic role necessary to counter NLHZ action in villages. Therefore, such cabinet would lead to spread party's influence in country and to probable NLHZ victory at next elections.

5. Most desirable avoid premature dissolution Assembly—dissolution of Assembly (reference telegram IV–G) would lead to early general elections and such elections at this time, when conservatives simply not organized against efficient NLHZ party, would most probably mean NLHZ sweep. Therefore, this alternative among least acceptable.

[3] See footnote 3, Document 172.

6. Petsarath alternative highly questionable—at present, Petsarath "solution" does not yet seem in offing as conservative leadership has apparently not considered this alternative. Petsarath, while popular in the countryside, has little backing among politicians. A call to him should be held as an outside possibility at this time. However, in event of being called to head government, Petsarath might well include his half-brother Souphanouvong in cabinet of technicians. Again, Souphanouvong's participation in such government—supported and publicized by NLHZ organization could only increase influence and prestige NLHZ.

7. If, however, creation unified conservative cabinet proves not feasible, and only solutions those of dissolution of Assembly or inclusion NLHZ minister, decision must be made whether US prefers buy 18 months' time by continuing support regardless composition cabinet or precipitate situation in immediate future by refusing support Laos in event NLHZ represented in cabinet. This problem very real since there are indications some conservatives consider Souphanouvong should be included in any cabinet because he is leader of victorious NLHZ and because of his outstanding ability.

8. If US decides it worthwhile buy time, then US may have to agree to inclusion of at least Souphanouvong in cabinet. However, Embassy believes maintenance present cabinet is worst alternative within this possibility, and it would be preferable in any case to have this cabinet resign and a new one formed with a different Prime Minister.

9. At same time Embassy believes that in order to obtain unified Western position with French, participation of Souvanna in government in some capacity, maybe even Prime Minister (unless Souphanouvong also included) likely necessary price to pay. Local British agree with this evaluation.

10. Possibility of military solution was discussed and excluded in paragraph 9 Embtel 1901. In summary, Embassy recommends:

(1) While attempting introduce some new faces, US must continue to work with existing leadership.

(2) We make every effort bring about broadly supported conservative cabinet.

(3) Creation of single strong Conservative party be determined as US objective.

(4) In event Souphanouvong included in cabinet, our position must depend on:

(A) Whether gain of eighteen months' time is preferable to new crisis and probable dissolution of Assembly and general elections,

(B) Whether Souphanouvong would be neutralized by strong Prime Minister and strong ministers.

Conclusion: In reference telegram Embassy forwarded tentative analysis of May 4 election results. In this cable Embassy has tried to set forth its recommendations re future US policies in Laos. In a third cable Embassy,[4] in collaboration with Country Team, will discuss tangible action which should be taken by RLG and US in political, economic, military, social and information fields to achieve US objective of keeping Laos from Communist domination. As an example of my thinking I intend recommend that we push for the adoption by the RLG of a sound but modest long-range economic development plan including the scheduled completion before elections on at least a minimum serviceable basis of certain public communications facilities such as (a) Highway 13 extended north to Nam Tha with connecting roads to Thailand, South Vietnamese and Burmese road systems and all provincial capitals, (b) extension and development of key airstrips to at least C–47 size, (c) extension and improvement of civilian and military telecommunications net to ensure minimum adequate contact with all financial capitals and key airfields, (d) bulldozed dry weather access roads to all important village areas. I also expect to suggest that we insist on redefinition existing concepts of the missions of the ANL and the various civil government departments so that servicing and protection of the welfare of the mass of citizenry become obviously paramount.

Smith

[4] Not further identified.

176. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 22, 1958—8 p.m.

1991. Department pass information CINCPAC for POLAD.

1. Conversation with Katay May 22 (reference Embtel 1988)[2] reinforced opinion I had been forming as result my conversations with

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2258. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Paris, London, Bangkok, Saigon, and Phnom Penh.

[2] In telegram 1988, May 2, Smith reported on a conversation with Katay in which Katay asked for more aid for expansion of the police. Smith believed that Katay planned to use the strengthened police to expand his personal power and was looking for a visible sign of U.S. support to help him in a possible bid for the prime ministership in any new government. (*Ibid.*, 851J.501/5–2258; included in the microfiche supplement)

nearly all Lao Conservative leaders that almost all are indecisive about excluding NLHX from Cabinet and even less enthusiastic about suggestions advanced informally by British and ourselves and some French advisors re wisdom of merging their parties into monolithic Conservative bloc [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. Despite lip service rendered by most politicians and army officers, thinking is still to do "business as usual." Most Conservative leaders are still more concerned about blaming each other for defeat at polls than about future developments. Most Conservatives—Phoui, Souvanna and especially Katay—seem at least as much interested in their own welfare and in preparing "retreat on Riviera" as in safety of nation. There is now no discernible definitive trend among Lao to exclude NLHX from Cabinet nor real effort to forget past squabbles and confront NLHX as one single party. Unless US takes unequivocal stand at this time, preferably backed by Britain and France, present trend most unlikely to be reversed and NLHX may be expected to work itself easily into position by 1960 to take over country by legal means.

2. I am convinced we should not decide quietly to throw in sponge here before having tried at least one last time to forge Lao good elements together to face NLHX threat. I believe we must without delay attempt persuade leaders Conservative Majority eliminate NLHX from government so that by 1960 Lao voters will have clear-cut issue: they will be confronted with alien dominated party (NLHX) which had merely made empty promises, versus united Conservative party which will have had opportunity to carry out effective program aimed at satisfying legitimate needs and meeting justified grievances of Lao population. Basic to this is premise party lines be clearly drawn. NLHX must therefore be excluded from government so that the Conservative government can stand or fall on record it will have made during next 18 months.

3. Such a record must include implementation dynamic economic reform program reaching even into distant villages, marked progress in eliminating corruption and abuse of aid and the development of a feeling of security to permit voters to express themselves freely in general elections.

4. If sides are drawn clearly and NLHX excluded from government, I believe it will also be much easier for Department to sell idea of continued support for Laos at approximately present level to Congress. If however NLHX are included in government, issue between right and left (pro government versus Communism) would be completely blurred and hence it would not be a clear issue in 1960 on which voters could express themselves. If this basic cleavage is created between NLHX and non-NLHX parties, I believe Laos would also be in much better position to obtain support from other friendly neighboring countries such as South Vietnam and Thailand.

5. With election returns nearly final, next step in Assembly will be debate on validation of mandates of candidates elected in supplementary elections, which will probably be soon followed by resignation of old government and attempt at formation new government. Hence, if US considers it essential to seize this unique opportunity to bring together Lao Conservative elements around a firm anti-NLHX policy, US position must be made very clear to Lao leaders now. I would therefore appreciate Department's authorization to call on selected Lao leaders, and quietly make clear that the US Government considers that continued US massive support to RLG will be jeopardized unless Lao Conservatives, who are now clearly holding majority Assembly votes, move without further delay into formation of broadly based Conservative Cabinet from which NLHX are clearly excluded and then proceed energetically to insure:

(A) Merger of Conservative parties or at very least their effective and continuous cooperation as a single bloc;
(B) Elaboration and implementation of dynamic economic aid program to bring benefits government to every element of people;
(C) Removal of at least most obvious sources of corruption and abuses of aid by economic reforms;
(D) Arrangements to support and integrate into harmonious effort ANL, auto-defense and police to maintain security all over country;
(E) Strengthening a Lao civilian administration so that it can govern country.

Such a program would provide hope that NLHX will not be able legally take over the government and economy of Laos in 1960.

Smith

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177. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 27, 1958—8:15 p.m.

1420. Vientiane's 1965,[2] 1991,[3] and 2000.[4] Department approves Embassy's recommendations Embtel 1965 as basis US position next RLG Government. That is, we favor:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2358. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Corcoran, cleared by Kocher and Parsons, and approved by Robertson. Repeated to Saigon, Paris, CINCPAC for POLAD, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and London.

[2] Document 175.

[3] *Supra.*

[4] Telegram 2000 from Vientiane, May 23, reads as follows: "If given authorization requested reftel would plan for time being to approach only Souvanna, Phoui, Katay

Continued

1. Broadly based conservative cabinet excluding NLHX but including Independents, Nationalists, Democrats and, if necessary, Bong elements.

2. Immediate creation broadest conservative front in Assembly to support conservative cabinet and early merger all conservative parties into single strong party.

3. Inclusion younger, more energetic new men as Secretaries State in certain key ministries, or as Ministers if feasible.

We agree with Vietnamese (Saigon's 2342 rptd Vientiane 381)[5] that Souvanna should if possible be eliminated as candidate Prime Minister. Having presided over severe conservative defeat at hands his half brother he is discredited if not suspect and no longer merits confidence non-Communist elements at home or abroad.

You authorized call on selected Lao leaders and make clear US views as set forth para 5 Embtel 1991 exercising caution ensure discussion subpara (B) does not lead RLG believe commitments being made future aid level.

In discussion with Lao you may draw freely on following frank assessment difficulty we now face in continuing support RLG:

Congressional and public reaction election results and allegations waste aid program[6] make it difficult continue justify aid to Laos. Unless various conservative elements can unite without delay and form non-Communist government prepared undertake reforms necessary win wide popular support we may find reduction funds and higher priorities elsewhere in the world will make it impossible continue support RLG. Pertinent to note House Appropriations Committee Chairman Passman has taken unusual step of letting it be known that special inquiry will be made into Laos situation during MSP hearing.

Difficulty experienced obtaining release June funds is also case in point. Souvanna and ministers who accompanied him here in January will remember assurances they gave re determination prepare unified conservative slate and win election. Failure these assurances materialize has discredited Souvanna and colleagues and greatly increased

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and Leuam and to then inform Crown Prince of reactions during conversation already planned for later date with him." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2358)

[5] In this telegram, May 21, the Embassy in Saigon reported a conversation with South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Mau, who believed that Souvanna Phouma had to be eliminated politically as a potential candidate for prime minister in any new Lao government. Mau stated that his government was attempting to do this and suggested that the United States encourage the French to withdraw their support from Souvanna Phouma. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2158; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] See, for example, *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on the Far East and the Pacific of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mutual Security Program in Laos*, 85th Cong., 2d Sess., May 7 and 8, 1958.

difficulty obtaining support for government in which they participate. Katay should understand his opposition to unified Nationalist-Independent slate and defeat of Conservative candidates in his home province of Pakse also make it difficult generate confidence in his leadership.

We understand conservatives badly shocked election results but unless their shock translated into active conservative unity there is no sound basis on which we can argue that continued aid will produce different result from heretofore.

If conservatives do in fact profit by experience and promptly develop unified conservative front and non-Communist government we shall be ready to discuss with them possibilities readjustment our present programs and providing maximum help in implementation dynamic aid program such as described para 5(B) Embtel 1991.

You may discuss foregoing with your British colleague. Department will do likewise British Embassy here.

Herter

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178. Editorial Note

At the 367th meeting of the National Security Council, May 29, Allen Dulles gave his briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles described the generally satisfactory results of the recent Greek, Italian, and Japanese elections. He then discussed the supplementary elections in Laos as follows:

"As to the results of the election in Laos, unlike the results in the other three countries these were bad. They were bad simply because the conservative parties could not reconcile their differences, had put up several candidates in each electoral district, and had accordingly splintered the conservative vote. The Communists, meanwhile, had put up only one candidate in each district. Thus the results had been as anticipated, though we had done our very best to try to reconcile the conservative factions and to induce them to put up only one candidate in each voting district. While the significant Communist success in Laos would not mean that they would control the National Assembly, they will certainly increase their power. The trend was bad, and we had a good deal to fear in the 1959 general elections.

"The President commented that it would be a serious matter if any country such as Laos went Communist by the legal vote of its people." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason, May 29; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

179. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 29, 1958—2:10 p.m.

1431. Vientiane's 2021;[2] Deptel 1420.[3] If reaction Souvanna described reference Embtel represents genuine change his view NLHX and real determination develop promptly single well disciplined anti-NLHX party or bloc it is important development we shall want to exploit.

Desirability Souvanna's elimination as candidate Prime Minister expressed reference Deptel based on assessment Souvanna's past performance and only concrete performance by him can cause us revise our opinion.

Nevertheless if it is determined achievement our major objectives in Laos requires support Souvanna as Prime Minister we would be prepared do so. In this regard reference Deptel should not be interpreted so as to restrict Embassy's flexibility of action.

Herter

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2858. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Corcocan, cleared by Kocher and Parsons, and approved by Robertson. Repeated to Saigon, Paris, CINCPAC for POLAD, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and London.

[2] In telegram 2021, May 27, the Embassy reported that Souvanna Phouma appeared to be the first Lao leader to react "positively yet realistically" to the conservative election defeat. Souvanna called for exclusion of the NLHX from the new government and for a merger of all conservative parties into a single, well-disciplined party. According to the Embassy, he had been working toward this end. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/5–2758; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 177.

180. Editorial Note

On May 22, Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma released through the *Lao Presse* the text of a letter to the International Control and Supervision Commission for Laos informing the Commission that the Royal Government of Laos considered that, with the conclusion of the supplemental elections, the implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Laos had been accomplished. The letter specifically stated that the elections of May "have put the seal on total integration of all Lao citizens into the National community." The Royal Lao Government requested that the Commission inform it of its plans for an

early departure from Laos. The text of this letter was transmitted in telegram 1999 from Vientiane, May 22. (Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/5–2358)

On May 31, Souvanna sent the Commission a letter clarifying the one of May 22. A translated text was transmitted in telegram 2071 from Vientiane, May 31. It reads as follows:

"In my letter of May 22 I had honor to advise you RLG considered as fully accomplished the implementation of agreement on cessation of hostilities in Laos as well as fulfillment of all obligations undertaken by this government at Geneva conference.

"In order avoid any ambiguity on this subject, I wish to specify that RLG intends to continue to observe the engagement contained in its declaration made at Geneva regarding the military agreement and expressed in these terms:

"RLG is resolved never to pursue a policy of aggression and will never permit territory of Laos to be used in furtherance of such a policy.

"RLG will not join in any agreement with other states if this agreement includes obligation for RLG to (1) enter into military alliance not in conformity with principles of UN Charter and with principles of agreement on cessation of hostilities and as long as its security is not threatened, (2) establish bases on Lao territory for military forces of foreign powers (except for bases provided for in Article 8 of Geneva agreement).

"RLG is resolved to settle its international disputes by peaceful means so that international peace and security as well as justice shall not be endangered.

"During period which will elapse between date of cessation of hostilities in Vietnam and final settlement of political problems in that country, RLG will not request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel or in instructors, except for purpose of its effective territorial defense and within limits fixed by agreement on cessation of hostilities." (*Ibid.*)

181. Editorial Note

The staffing and role of the Programs Evaluation Office (PEO), a civilian military advisory group within the Embassy in Laos, became an issue after the May elections. Ambassador Smith presented the Department of State with three possible options on May 27. The first entailed recruitment of PEO personnel within the limits of the 1954 Geneva Accords, which essentially meant hiring additional civilians to bring the PEO up to its fully authorized strength. The second course of action, supported by the Chief of the PEO, retired General Rothwell

H. Brown, envisioned assignment of active military personnel on a temporary duty basis. Ambassador Smith believed that this solution was only temporary and contravened the Geneva Accords. The third alternative suggested by Smith was replacement of the civilian PEO by a regular U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). Smith noted that this third alternative depended upon acceptance of the view that the May 4 election constituted the completion of the Geneva Accords in Laos and that the Royal Government of Laos was no longer bound by them. In addition, the contemplated establishment of a regular MAAG would require the support and cooperation of the French who had their own training mission in Laos. (Telegram 2016 from Vientiane, May 27; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2758)

The Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral Felix B. Stump, recommended to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, that the United States, in light of the unsatisfactory results of the election in Laos, take the calculated risk of establishing a regular MAAG rather than the more dangerous one of allowing the Lao National Army to continue to deteriorate in the face of Communist challenge. (CINCPAC telegram 03130Z, June 3; *ibid.*, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1958)

The Department of State on June 4 responded that while the establishment of a regular MAAG remained the eventual objective in Laos, it was not politically possible at that time. The idea of using active military personnel on a temporary basis was also open to serious objection on political grounds. Therefore the first course of action recommended by Ambassador Smith, hiring additional civilians up to the authorized level of the PEO, was the only possible choice for the time being. (Telegram 1457 to Vientiane, June 4; *ibid.*, 751J.00/5–2758)

The documents described are included in the microfiche supplement.

182. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, June 4, 1958—9 a.m.

2075. Department pass CINCPAC for POLAD. Deptel 1436.[2]

1. I am fully aware of difficulties Department now has in justifying adequate appropriations for Laos, and agree with OCB view (paragraph 2 reference telegram)[3] that resolution exchange rate problem is imperative, but I consider merger of conservative parties and formation anti-Communist government now clearly must enjoy an even higher priority. I therefore have already started informing selected Lao leaders that July funds may not be forthcoming unless they have given tangible proof that continued US aid will produce different results from heretofore. I shall explain that this requires concrete results in areas of (1) merging conservative parties, (2) formation anti-Communist government excluding NLHZ, and (3) monetary reform.

2. Furthermore from conversations with Lao and French advisors which will be summarized in a following cable,[4] we in Embassy have become convinced that if negotiations in Washington are to be quickly concluded exploratory talks should be undertaken here first to seek to obtain definition current Lao position which we understand confidentially has altered considerably since February and then to try to bring it close enough to US viewpoint to provide more hope for prompt agreement in Washington.

3. I would like to suggest therefore that I be authorized to start preliminary technical discussions with RLG right away in Vientiane to help define areas of agreement and disagreement and possibly narrow

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/6–458. Secret; Niact.

[2] This joint State–ICA telegram stated that since the formulation of a new Lao Government would delay negotiations for monetary reform past the already agreed upon June deadline, the United States was unprepared to fund Lao armed forces beyond June 30 and Lao leaders should be informed accordingly. (*Ibid.*, 851J.13/5–358; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In this paragraph, the Department noted that the OCB "viewed the resolution of the exchange rate problem imperative." At the OCB meeting, ICA Director James Smith stated that as long as the United States continued aid payments, the Lao "would stall" on monetary reform. Parsons said that the Lao Government was "not necessarily acting in bad faith" and the elections had delayed the negotiations. (Notes by Richards, May 28; Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Preliminary Notes III)

[4] Apparent reference to telegram 2081 from Vientiane, June 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/6–558; included in the microfiche supplement)

differences between two sides.[5] Negotiations could then be concluded in Washington with representatives new Lao Government. I do not believe it is necessary for me to dwell on undesirability of having present government sign an agreement to which Souphanouvong objects and once he is excluded from new government he can claim that he preferred to leave government rather than yield to American pressure.

4. I agree with Department that in any official negotiations preliminary or otherwise it is undesirable to give RLG impression US has dropped proposals discussed last fall and therefore feel that we should begin officially where we left off when Leuam departed Washington last February. As stated in interim agreement (Embassy despatch 143)[6] RLG has agreed to resume negotiations in June. Department's attention invited, however, to fact that interim agreement is not restricted to apply only FY 1958 funds as suggested by paragraph 1 reference telegram.

The suggestions Embassy and USOM made in Embtels 1940[7] and 1973[8] were not put forward primarily as suggestions for an alternation of our US position in the negotiations or to be the basis of an official American suggestion. It was primarily a recommendation that an idea of this nature or some alternative idea serving the same purpose be planted by the USOM banking advisor with his Lao and French colleagues clearly as his own personal speculation as to a possible Lao position to be put forward by them as a starting position in negotiations that would, as the Lao want, maintain on paper present official exchange rate while at same time offering US in practice considerably more for every dollar it sells Lao National Bank. The primary purpose to be served was therefore to take advantage of the opportunity presented by USOM banking advisor's informal relations with Lao National Bank officials to bring Lao opening position at least a little closer in effect to ours and thus make an early conclusion of agreement more likely. However, a secondary purpose was to suggest exploration of

[5] In telegram 1446 to Vientiane, June 6, the Department responded that time was insufficient for preliminary discussions and resumption of aid payments depended on monetary reform. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/6–458; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Dated April 2. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/4–258; included in the microfiche supplement)

[7] The reference is in error and should be to telegram 1955 from Vientiane, May 16, in which the Embassy and USOM suggested raising a compromise dual exchange rate solution with the Lao Government in which 35 kip to the dollar would be the government-to-government rate and 70 or 80 kip to the dollar would be the commercial rate. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/5–1658)

[8] In telegram 1973, May 20, the Embassy and USOM suggested that the best way for Laos to establish a commercial rate for the kip was in the form of an exchange tax equal to the difference between the 35 to 1 official rate and a commercial rate of 70 or 80 kip to the dollar. Such a tax would lessen the political repercussions of devaluation. (*Ibid.*, 851J.00/5–2058)

possible alternative avenues for providing monetary stabilization of a type which might result in broader and somewhat more permanent economic reform than that provided by the establishment of the immediate necessary minimum of a more realistic exchange rate and convertibility. At this point I agree fully with Department that this necessary minimum is the most we can hope to negotiate before the new fiscal year.

Smith

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183. Editorial Note

On June 13, members of the Nationalist Party and the Party of Independents dissolved their existing political organizations and joined together in a united party under the name "Rally of the Lao People" (RLP) or as it was also known, "Lao Hom Lao" (LHL). Other unaffiliated deputies in the National Assembly joined the RLP. The new party then elected members of a provisional executive committee as follows:

President: Souvanna Phouma
First Vice President: Katay D. Sasorith
Second Vice President: Phoui Sananikone
Secretary General: Ngon Sananikone
Deputy Secretary General: Ounheaun Norasing
Treasury General: Chao Nith Nokham
Deputy Treasury General: Leuam Insisiengmay
Councilors: Pheng Phongsavan, Nouphat Chounramany, Phagna Khammao, Tane Chounlamountri.

The official communiqué of the "Rally of the Lao People" is in telegram 2149 from Vientiane, June 16. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/6–1658) An analysis of the potential impact of the new Lao party is in telegram 2152 from Vientiane, June 16. In it, the Embassy noted that the temporary executive committee of the RLP included, as could only realistically be expected, the same personalities which had dominated Lao politics in the past. The next objective, according to the Embassy, was to encourage appointment of younger Lao politicians to working-level positions of the party. (*Ibid.*)

On June 17, the official *Lao Presse* announced formulation on June 15 of a "Committee for the Defense of National Interests" (CDNI). The organization was an anti-corruption, anti-Communist group of 111 self-proclaimed young "merchants, industrialists, farmers, work-

ers, intellectuals, police, functionaries civil and military." The CDNI supported the creation of the "Rally of the Lao People," called for other Lao to support it, and encouraged the RLP to get to work immediately to fulfill its professed goals. (Despatch 178 from Vientiane, June 19; *ibid.*,751J.00/6–1958)

The Country Team in Vientiane, in telegram 2233 from Vientiane, May 26, recommended a program for civic action, internal security, and administrative reform to keep Laos from falling under control of the NLHX at the next general election. The formation of the RLP was the first step; the next was formation of a government without the NLHX. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/5–2658)

The documents described are included in the microfiche supplement.

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184. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, July 10, 1958—3 p.m.

63. Saw Souvanna at his residence late afternoon July 9. Three subjects discussed.

1. Monetary reform.

I first handed him copy of letter from Acting Director USOM given Leuam by Loren that same morning informing RLG that no further dollars will be sold to National Bank until agreement reached on monetary reform.[2] Prime Minister replied that he is sorry US could not await outcome negotiations before taking such drastic action. Said that since army and police must be paid on time he may have to take entire problem before National Assembly to get its approval for advance by Lao National Bank. Prime Minister also said that delay by US in replying to Lao proposal postponed agreement monetary reform by at least one week. I replied that both Director USOM and myself had warned Lao Government on many occasions that unless agreement reached before June 30 it would be impossible to continue selling dollars to RLG at present unrealistic rate. I also tried discourage him

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/7–1058. Secret. Repeated to Paris and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Text of the letter was transmitted in telegram 65 from Vientiane, July 11. (*Ibid.*, 851J.13/7–1158; included in the microfiche supplement)

from taking monetary problem before Assembly since in my opinion this would merely make it more difficult come to agreement later. I justified this recommendation by pointing out that if Lao Government will act quickly in informal clarification and resolution of differences as suggested by Washington, monetary problem should be settled before end of month which would permit US resume payments and taking issue before Assembly now might therefore be premature.

Prime Minister then said Lao experts have certain comments on American proposal (Embtel 24).[3] We agreed that technicians would meet again July 11 to juxtapose US proposal and Lao comments with latter being forwarded informally to Washington.[4] Prime Minister mentioned specifically that in Lao view principle free convertibility which is cornerstone of US proposal seems to be inconsistent with controls requested by USOM and with maintenance PA system.

2. *Pending Cabinet crisis.*

Prime Minister said that validation deputies will be completed this week and present Cabinet will resign either Friday or next Monday. (*Lao Presse* evening July 9 reported that special commission on supplementary elections had completed its report and had forwarded it to National Assembly.)

He said that if he should be designated form next government he would include 3 to 4 good deputies in Cabinet but the majority would be young technicians. If Assembly should refuse invest such Cabinet he would no longer stand in way of young people and would encourage them to "express their views freely". Latter have come to see him recently to tell him that unless strong government can be invested army and young elite will not stand aside idly and watch country slide down hill. He hoped however that extreme measures would not be necessary and that Assembly will accept his solution.

He stressed present delicate political situation and thought that a brutal one-step devaluation would jeopardize necessary popular and legislative support and perhaps even make impossible task of any new anti-Communist government. He pleaded with me to ask Washington to re-examine more carefully Lao two step approach to monetary reform since this would give anti-Communist government time to establish itself firmly in saddle and prices will not rise as result devaluation. I replied that I would transmit his message to Washington but I

[3] Telegram 24 from Vientiane, July 5, contained the Embassy's draft memorandum on monetary reform. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/7–558; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] These comments were forwarded to Washington in telegram 80 from Vientiane, July 12, which included a record of the July 11 meeting. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/7–1258)

should think Washington would need more details on Lao two-step devaluation project before it could even receive any consideration. Such details might include:

(A) Setting definite date for elimination second rate,
(B) Providing automatic means of switching from dual rate system to single rate (i.e. no further negotiations needed),
(C) Suggested figure for new rate,
(D) Limiting amount of dollars which could be sold at 35 to one rate.

He replied that he would ask Lao experts give these details July 11 when US proposal will be discussed.

3. Purchase of residence.

Before leaving I asked him about status Embassy's request to purchase present residence from Lao Government. Prime Minister replied that he and Minister Foreign Affairs had approved it but it also needed approval of rest of Cabinet. He did not expect any difficulty from other members but this would be decided July 10. Once principle of purchase agreed on, it will only be necessary determine fair price. I told him that Washington would certainly appreciate this friendly gesture since I knew that certain other resident diplomatic missions had made similar request but had in end been turned down by RLG.

Comment: It was apparent that Prime Minister was greatly disturbed over necessity of facing fact that monetary reform and serious government crisis had come to head at exact same moment. His fear that this might make formation government he has been working for impossible seemed genuine. Over past two weeks he had obviously become less certain of his ability to obtain necessary votes to support formation of strong anti-NLHX government when faced simultaneously with necessity of monetary reform of type proposed by US. I believe fact that he is trying to force through validation of deputies, vote on anti-Communist bill and resignation of his government next week and also seems determined to attempt form government of type we have urged immediately thereafter is largely motivated by his belief that with formation of such a government he may hope to get enough concessions from US on monetary reform to make Lao swallow bitter pill of devaluation.

Smith

185. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, July 17, 1958—8:43 p.m.

84. Your 58.[2]

1. Although RLG has not yet reacted to May 4 defeat there may be some cause for encouragement in Souvanna's apparent readiness include new faces while excluding NLHX from new Cabinet. Activities CDNI [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] also seem hopeful. Believe we should take necessary measures exploit these possibilities in manner to lead events in direction unified non-Communist front and government which will permit us provide maximum help in developing popular support and preventing Communist takeover of government by legal means in 1959–1960.

2. It seems likely CDNI constitutes nucleus of group envisaged Deptel 1382[3] to provide leadership for action in Assembly during government crisis, and development political action, propaganda and "aid to people" programs for period leading up to general elections.

3. Concerning specific alternatives discussed para 3 reftel we agree (C) would be waste of time and effort. (A) would be ideal with hope that in time even Souvanna could be replaced by younger and less politically equivocal personality. However, we recognize impracticability investiture such a government at this time. (B) appears most practicable immediate alternative. Its maximum effectiveness however would require inclusion more new faces than old and assurance some key ministries under young leaders. Alternative (D) would seem inevitable should (B) fail or should long drawn out government crisis develop. We envisage (D) not as military action to set aside constitutional forms but as strong action by Crown Prince within existing legal and constitutional limits. Its purpose would be protect national interest against obstructionist sabotage by corrupt and venal deputies to Communist profit. As last resort to prevent Communist political or military coup other measures might be considered but not now under study.

4. You should inform French and British colleagues we consider government same old faces useless; we would like clean sweep and all new faces but recognize impracticability such solution at this time; we

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–1058. Top Secret; Priority. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared by Alfred leS. Jenkins, Floyd L. Whittington, and Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Paris, and London.

[2] In telegram 58, July 10, Smith reported a conversation with French Ambassador Gassouin in which Gassouin envisioned four possible new governments: A) young technicans under Souvanna, B) Souvanna and deputies and technicans in equal proportions, C) Souvanna and "same old forces," D) Crown-imposed government without Assembly investiture. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/7–1058; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 173.

believe cabinet headed by Souvanna containing indispensable minimum old faces with some key ministries under young new leaders most desirable and practicable; if Souvanna cannot accomplish latter we prepared back Crown Prince if he were disposed to take resolute action in imposing legal and constitutional strong government. You should also inform British and French we convinced establishment government, by whichever alternative, capable of preventing Communist takeover in 1959–1960 requires close French-UK-US cooperation in rendering moral support to vigorous non-Communist elements. This not question of identical or parallel démarches but of coordination efforts all levels representatives three countries in exercising influence. We shall so inform French and British Embassies here.

5. You may inform Souvanna and other Lao leaders as you deem appropriate government under his leadership of type described para 4 above would be one with which we prepared discuss possibilities readjustment our present program and providing maximum help (Deptel 1420, Embtel 1991).[4]

6. Monetary reform discussed separate message[5] remains immediate imperative.

Dulles

[4] Documents 177 and 176, respectively.

[5] Apparent reference to telegram 78 to Vientiane, July 16, which contained background information on the U.S. position on monetary reform. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/7–1458; included in the microfiche supplement)

186. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, July 20, 1958—9 p.m.

134. Department pass CINCPAC for POLAD for information. For Robertson and Parsons.

1. On July 19th General Sounthone sent message to my house asking for appointment to see me next day on "important and very secret matter". I agreed to meet him at residence on July 20 at 4 p.m.

2. At this afternoon's meeting Sounthone appeared unusually serious. He measured his words carefully. He said that ANL wants to help give Laos kind of government which will satisfy legitimate aspi-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–2058. Top Secret; Niact.

rations of Lao people. Past governments have failed in this task. Government which Assembly wanted invest would be weak and ineffective, similar to governments Laos had in past. This would lead to inevitable legal take-over by NLHZ in next election. He claimed that a strong government which could fight Communist threat and satisfy legitimate demands of people by making necessary reforms has no chance of obtaining Assembly's investiture.

3. Sounthone said that ANL cannot stand by idly seeing country slip into Communist hands. Time for action has arrived. This was reason for his coming to see me today. He said that to save country ANL and all "healthy" elements in Laos have choice between two alternatives:

A. Support formation of a strong government which is imposed on country by crown but maintains maximum aspects of legality.
B. A military coup d'etat.

4. Personally he favors first solution but he would like to obtain my advice. I said that I agreed with him that a coup d'etat, by which he meant imposing a military junta by force on nation, would not meet approval abroad. By flouting legal procedures, Laos would invite strong reaction from within and [garble] foreign countries. Internally, such a military regime would have to [garble—impose?] itself on nation and much of its time would have to be devoted to maintaining order rather than taking reform needed to wipe out source of people's dissatisfaction. Externally, it might invite intervention by ICC and maybe even by Communist states bordering Laos. Hence it is imperative to maintain maximum legitimacy in any effort to give Laos a strong government.

5. Sounthone and I then examined practicable methods of obtaining strong government without violating traditional parliamentary and constitutional procedures. Following time-table evolved from this discussion:

A. Present government expected resign July 21 or 22.
B. Crown Prince submits resignation to King but withholds taking action until ICC has left Laos (now expected July 26).
C. In pursuance parliamentary procedure Crown Prince appoints outgoing Prime Minister (Souvanna) to try form next government. He would, however, indicate at that time that such a government must be a strong one, made up predominantly of new faces holding such key portfolios as Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior, while including only a few elected able deputies.
D. Souvanna would consult all parties in effort to form such a government and only such a government. Once Souvanna finds necessary support for such investiture unlikely or even uncertain, he would inform Savang. (Up to this point events would follow traditional parliamentary practice.)

E. By virture Article 13 of Constitution Crown Prince would immediately "close present session of Assembly" and on basis of Article 25 he would designate, by royal decree, Souvanna to form kind of government needed to save nation.

6. Re make-up of such a strong government Sounthone and I agreed that 12 members might be a good figure, 4 of which deputies or "old faces" and remaining 8 drawn from new elements. Names of deputies or "old faces" which seemed possible to him included Ngon, Somsanith, Leuam, Nouphat, and Khoranhok. For 8 new members he did not mention others beyond the usual names—Sisouk, Leuam (Lao Ambassador to Cambodia), Col. Phoumi, Khamphan Panya—and implied others readily available. He suggested possibility larger number. I agreed but suggested no more than 6 old faces or deputies. In addition to maintaining this proportion in a new government I also urged that key portfolios such Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, be given to new elements. Sounthone agreed.

7. Sounthone and I agreed that it would be very desirable for Souvanna to head such a government because:

A. He enjoys considerable prestige abroad and hence inspires confidence and his name alone would give it aura of legitimacy.

B. He is architect of recent unification nation hence enjoys considerable prestige in Laos and would probably raise less opposition from Communist countries than any other acceptable leader. I said that since Souvanna is somewhat "pliable" it seems possible he might be willing to lead such a government. Sounthone replied emphatically that in his opinion Souvanna is already willing to lead such a formation.

I suggested that including some deputies in a predominantly non-parliamentarian government would have the advantage of splitting Assembly opposition which must be expected against such an usual procedure. Ngon for instance could carry with him votes of former independents, Somsanith and Nouphat might enjoy support of some nationalists, Leuam might bring support of unaffiliated deputies, and Khoranhok might appeal to newly elected deputies. Inclusion of some of these leaders would undoubtedly help emphasize legality of such government. Furthermore, inclusion of some experienced hands might be check on young non-deputies, new to ministerial tasks, and prevent them from taking irresponsible or poorly planned action. Finally, new government would thus not break of [*off*?] all bridges with Assembly; and perhaps make it possible for Assembly at later date to approve retroactively such a government.

8. When I asked him whether such a solution would meet with approval of Crown Prince, Sounthone replied that Savang appears to be "greatly changed man" and according to his information the Crown Prince is already thinking along lines this formula. When in return

Sounthone asked me about US attitude, I replied I should think US would support—politically, economically, and militarily—such a Lao solution if it was responsibly planned and implemented with carefully measured precision.

9. Re ANL attitude, Sounthone had no doubt that ANL would back this solution. He said, however, that it must be expected that NLHZ will cause trouble and ANL must be in a position to maintain security and support government imposed by royal decree. I urged and he agreed that in all its activities, ANL would be merely champion of legitimacy. He said that ANL is preparing to meet the emergency and that he feared trouble by NLHZ and from three different sources:

A. From PL troops stationed near Luang Prabang. Since they have no ammunition, Sounthone thinks they are not too dangerious.

B. From PL troops in Plaine des Jarres who have plenty ammunition and according to his information even have a plan to fight ANL.

C. Village people brought into Vientiane by NLHZ during last few days who would demonstrate against government. Since ANL may be short of ammunition he asked whether US could supply some if needed. I replied that he should give me a detailed list of ANL's immediate needs and that in the event it was needed to support "such a royal solution" I would try my best to help them procure necessary items. (I asked whether he did not think supplies at French bases might be available in case of need.)

I said that if Lao undertakes this venture, it must not fail. I therefore urged him that ANL should plan very carefully every step in its task of maintaining order and security during decisive moments of formation new government.

10. If efforts successful, Sounthone asked whether US would be prepared support ANL in assisting those villages which already are pro-government in obtaining desired items such as wells, schools, access road, et cetera. Sounthone continued that villages which are against government would get no support. If anti-government villages want ANL assistance they would be told to appeal to Souphonuvong. If he cannot help, which is expected, and anti-government villages again request ANL to help, villages then would get requested assistance from ANL. This, Sounthone claims, would be simple and effective device to win over nation. He voiced hope US would be willing provide some supplies for such an operation. I replied that the time to talk about that was after the decision for a "royal solution" had been taken but that I would personally do my best to obtain Washington support for such a project and if the precision of RLG planning this time justified the hope that this type of effort would be more successful than that before the May 4 elections I was certain Washington would not be unsympathetic.

11. Before leaving, Sounthone asked whether he should inform Crown Prince of this afternoon's conversation or would I prefer to do so myself. I replied if Crown Prince has any questions and he wants to see me, I would of course be very happy to be received by him but that I considered it important to stress that this is a Lao scheme in which Crown must make the decision and take the lead if formula is to succeed. He then said he would inform the Crown Prince tomorrow morning and promised that he would keep in close touch with me in these critical moments.[2]

12. When I discussed ideas expressed Deptel 84[3] with French Ambassador last night, he confided that French Government is very favorably disposed to government imposed by royal decree. French now fear continuation of present inefficient regime and suggest any attempt to obtain actual Assembly investiture would only make alternate solution more difficult to achieve. Solution imposed by Crown would be supported wholeheartedly in Paris because:

A. It would be first effective barrier to Communism in Laos.
B. Crown Prince has great prestige in France and a government appointed by him would hence be acceptable.
C. French would be flattered by Lao taking "a leaf out of former colonial powers book". Paris would conclude that success of De Gaulle has not gone unnoticed by Lao.

13. It appears to me that local French are not only approving such a solution but are actively supporting it. Indeed, French Embassy, under pressure local French military, may already be prepared to condone outright military coup with little regard to maintaining legitimacy except out of consideration for US position.

[*Numbered paragraph 14 (less than 1 line of source text) not declassified*]

15. ARMA requests pass DEPTAR for ACSI.

Smith

[2] As reported in telegram 152 from Vientiane, July 22, Sounthone told Smith that because of an illness he was unable to see the Crown Prince. Instead he passed the substance of his conversation with Smith to General Ouane who saw the Prince. Prince Savang told Ouane that Souvanna should be allowed to continue with his plan to appoint a government of seven old politicians and seven new ones. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/7–2258; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] *Supra.*

187. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Sprague) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Dillon)[1]

Washington, July 22, 1958.

DEAR MR. DILLON: The recent deterioration of the situation in Laos has caused the Department of Defense to review most carefully the Military Assistance Program in that country. This review has resulted in certain conclusions which are discussed below.

Laos, which is contiguous to every country in Southeast Asia except Malaya, and which has a long common frontier with Communist China, is considered from a strategic point of view as a vulnerable area. Its loss to Communism could initiate a psychological reaction which would threaten the entire position of the United States in that part of the world. During the recent elections the Communists scored gains of such an impressive nature as to indicate a real and imminent peril. It is quite conceivable that if the present trend continues, Laos may be within the Communist orbit within another year.

The key to the future of Laos lies in the Laotian Army, the one unifying and effective implement of government now available to the still pro-Western Laotian administration. This army is being trained by the French but is completely supported by the United States Military Assistance Program.

The Geneva Accords were interpreted in 1955 to make inadvisable the establishment of a MAAG in Laos. As a consequence the Military Assistance Program is presently being administered by a "Program Evaluation Office" made up of civilians with military backgrounds. The Ambassador to Laos, CINCPAC, the GAO inspectors, and Defense Department visitors to Laos, as well as the Operations Coordinating Board, are all of the opinion that this expedient is an unsatisfactory one. One of the primary problems faced by the PEO is the difficulty of recruiting personnel capable of performing the difficult tasks required by the Laotian situation. This problem of recruitment would be minimized by the establishment of a conventional MAAG. A thorough review of the problem indicates that a conventional MAAG of approximately the same size as the present PEO is required to support properly the Laotian Army and to make full use of the MAP funds available.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/7–2258. Secret. A copy of this letter in the Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698, 334 MAAG Laos, identifies Colonel Bingham as the drafter.

Allied with this problem of converting the PEO to a military organization is that of the improvement of training for which responsibility is presently in French hands. The low quality of the French Mission, plus the lack of any U.S.-French agreement on division of advisory responsibilities, are major contributing factors to the present unacceptable situation. It is the opinion of the Department of Defense that every effort should be made to have the United States assume such training responsibilities for the Laotian forces as the French are unable to carry out effectively, and to reach agreement with the French as to the responsibilities of our respective missions.

There appear to be three major political factors involved in any effort to implement the foregoing. These are first, the future of the International Control Commission (ICC); second, the reaction of the French to a proposal for our taking over any of their responsibilities; and third, the acceptability to the Laotians of a MAAG responsible both for training and supply.

U.S. policy at the present time appears to be to encourage the phase-out of the ICC, and it is hoped by the Department of Defense that this can be done within the fairly near future. Unless carefully handled, French reaction to the United States moving into what has been considered a French domain may be unpleasant but it is believed possible in the broad field of Franco-American relations that this can be managed in a politically acceptable manner. Finally, it is believed that the Royal Laotian Government would accept stronger U.S. participation were it proposed.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Brigadier General Ouane, Chief of Staff of the Laotian Army, has recently suggested to CINCPAC that a Laotian-United States-French Council, chaired by the Laotians, be convened for the purpose of coordinating all aspects of military assistance. General Ouane in discussing this proposal stated that, in his view, the United States-French relationship with respect to the military advisory effort in Laos is less of a problem than is generally considered to be the case in United States circles.

It would appear that an acceptable way to establish a MAAG in Laos would be to phase regular military personnel into the PEO on a slow and measured step by step basis starting as soon as the current effort to inactivate the ICC is concluded. The PEO would continue as the official U.S. agency until such time as agreement is completed so that the MAAG can be formally and officially established. Since the present Chief of the PEO is scheduled to finish his tour in February of next year, and has indicated that he does not desire to remain for a second tour, it would seem that this might be an excellent time to make the changeover.

In view of the recent Congressional hearings on the 1959 aid bill, particularly those before the Passman Committee, and of the Department of Defense opinion that the risks are greater in letting the situation in Laos drift than in taking positive action along the lines outlined above, it is strongly recommended that the Department of State favorably consider the foregoing suggested course of action and initiate the preliminary political arrangements necessary for its implementation.

Sincerely yours,

Mansfield D. Sprague

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188. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, July 29, 1958—10 p.m.

206. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Reference Embassy telegram 202.[2] Following are my recommendations re solution cabinet crisis:

1. There now appears to be substantial agreement on inclusion following personalities in new government:

(A) Old faces: Souvanna as Prime Minister, Leuam, Ngon, Chao Nith, Somsanith, Bouasy (all selected by RPL);
(B) New faces: Sisouk, Phoumi, General Ouane, Khamphan Panya, Thao Leuam;
(C) New old face: Bong, who now seems clearly acceptable to both RPL and CDNI.

2. Souvanna and RPL leaders have taken for granted Katay and Phoui must be members new cabinet. However Katay not acceptable to CDNI and I would consider his inclusion destructive of nearly all US hopes based on new government. His presence would tarnish government's repute in eyes of public and would have stifling effect on new elements.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–2958. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 202, July 28, the Ambassador reported that recent indications pointed toward Souvanna Phouma forming a government dominated by old faces that could not be expected to take the action necessary to prevent Laos from sliding "behind Curtain" during the next 2 years. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/7–2858; included in the microfiche supplement)

3. Consider Phoui's inclusion in cabinet would be definite asset and will so inform him. However, problem may arise in that Souvanna might consider that exclusion Katay should be balanced by exclusion Phoui. I would greatly regret such decision which in my opinion is definitely not necessary. However, I feel even this price should be paid if necessary to keep Katay out. Phoui [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] would still step down if US considered such action necessary, but that if he did so at this time it would perhaps irretrievably blacken his reputation politically and that out of respect for his own personal dignity he would find it very difficult to step down while being lumped with Katay as an element undesirable to the young and to the US. He has to our knowledge from the first suggested that new young elements be included in this cabinet and is eager to work with them and seems to be the one old leader who says he has no objection to their having a majority of portfolios.

4. I believe that, if Oudone Sananikone is added, cabinet named in paragraph 1 plus Phoui is best we can now hope see invested legally by Assembly. Phoui's participation would give new elements a leader and mentor which some will probably need. Furthermore, he has proven himself the Lao leader with whom we can most easily and frankly discuss matters, so that his presence in cabinet would give our views weight in new government. At same time he is old politician and his participation would logically be balanced by inclusion of another "new face". Oudone Sananikone, who is also the man most capable of carrying out the all-important village aid program, would be the logical choice. His inclusion would also give civic action cabinet status. Exclusion Katay and inclusion Oudone would therefore mean 6 new faces and 6 old politicians, plus Souvanna and Bong. In any case, CDNI has to date been unable put forward any additional names, but indicated it would participate under these conditions.

5. In summary, I recommend that Department grant me permission to state to Souvanna if I find it necessary the US would only support his presently proposed cabinet if:

(A) Katay excluded; and
(B) Oudone Sananikone included in addition to 5 young faces which Souvanna himself named.

If Souvanna indicated he cannot agree to exclusion Katay without that of Phoui, I would express our very strong regret but would not make retention Phoui an essential condition of our support. However, I would consider that Oudone must still be included.

6. I consider such government very minimum if Laos is to be saved, and Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] staffs now agree that this is best we can hope to see legally invested by

Assembly. Therefore we consider use of our influence on this issue should be clear and unstinted, and if our intervention is to be effective it must be made now.

Smith

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189. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, July 30, 1958—10:48 a.m.

147. Reference Embtels 206 and 207.[2]

1. Fully concur thinking set forth Embtel 206 particularly any legitimate measures eliminate Katay, subject following:

a) No Lao in recent years has better understood nor more faithfully supported US views than Phoui. His experience (including Geneva Conference) and mature common sense make inclusion most desirable. We would, therefore, be extremely reluctant see him dropped and this would have to be Souvanna's decision. Believe also great care should be taken avoid any impression being created that US has dropped such staunch supporter for sake expediency in current crisis. We cannot afford create impression US not dependable and that any leader with whom we worked may be lightly expended. Regardless Souvanna's decision believe you should tell Phoui personally substance foregoing and our hope that whatever Souvanna's decision, Phoui will continue play influential role as he did even before becoming Foreign Minister in 1957.

b) Assume you realize inclusion Oudone and retention Phoui would mean three Sananikones in cabinet, which likely be unacceptable all other Lao groups.

2. US cannot now foretell what support possible for Laos in future. Severe cut in MSP Program, mounting dissatisfaction Laos program further fanned by *Readers Digest* reprint *Wall Street Journal* arti-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–3058. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons, cleared by Kocher, and approved by Robertson. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Telegram 206 is *supra*. Telegram 207, July 30, reads as follows: "Best information now available indicates Souvanna planning present his Cabinet before Assembly tomorrow 31 provided he obtains approved list RPL caucus tonight. Hence we have less than six hours to make known our views. Therefore, unless otherwise instructed and if above information confirmed, intend see Souvanna before end of day to convey thinking set forth Embassy telegram 206." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–3058)

cle,[3] and failure thus far to obtain definitive and acceptable monetary reform combine present bleak picture. In seeking force Souvanna mold cabinet accordance views reftels, US not only carrying intervention to great lengths, but also assuming heavy responsibility. Should Souvanna accept our views and then anticipated US support not be forthcoming, we would be placed in most disadvantageous, perhaps indefensible, position and adverse reaction might destroy whatever influence we had left to prevent Laos slipping under NLHX control.

3. If possible and time permits, much prefer US views be conveyed indirectly [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. However, if in your view situation requires, you may speak directly to Souvanna.[4] He should understand, however, that in conveying such views we can give no assurance re future support which dependent on solution difficult problems here and in Laos. Our policy, of course, remains unchanged, namely support to best of our ability so long as Laos vigorously seeking retain its independence.

Dulles

[3] Reference is to a condensation in *Reader's Digest*, August 1958, pp. 41–45, of an article by Igor Oganesoff, "Living It Up in Laos," originally printed in the *Wall Street Journal*, April 8, 1958.

[4] As reported in telegram 212 from Vientiane, July 31, Smith saw Souvanna before receiving this telegram. Smith attempted to convince Souvanna that Katay, who was designated to be the new Minister of Justice and Religious Cults, was a bad choice. Smith advised Souvanna informally that he might be jeopardizing U.S. support by appointing Katay, but, according to Smith, the Prime Minister seemed willing to take the risk. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–3158; included in the microfiche supplement)

190. Editorial Note

At the 374th meeting of the National Security Council on July 31, Allen Dulles began the meeting with the briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security," which touched on efforts in Laos to form a new government. The relevant portion of the briefing and discussion reads as follows:

"Turning to the Far East, Mr. Dulles reported that efforts were being made to form a new government in Laos. A new and dynamic group, the Committee for the Defense of National Interests, was trying to get more support, but would probably receive a maximum of five seats in the Cabinet. The Committee was anti-Communist and was

being quietly supported by the United States. Most of the Cabinet members would probably be the same old political hacks, whose continued rule will probably result in an eventual Communist take-over.

"The recognition of Communist China by Cambodia was no surprise, said Mr. Dulles. Prime Minister Sihanouk of Cambodia was an extraordinary person, who acted on impulse rather than reason. He had long felt the need for accommodation with Communist China, and had been influenced by the conflict between Cambodia and South Vietnam resulting from South Vietnam intrusions into Cambodian territory along the border. The Cambodian Prime Minister had a strong antipathy to South Vietnam.

"The President asked whether there were marked ethnic and language differences between Cambodia and South Vietnam. Mr. Dulles said there were marked differences between the two countries, although the Thai language spread through both. The President noted that Laos was one of the few landlocked countries in the world, and wondered why it was not a part of some other country—for example, Thailand. Mr. Dulles said it would be difficult to make Laos a part of Thailand because the Thais were not strong enough to absorb Laos. The President said he had not meant that we should attempt to unite the two countries; he merely wondered why, historically, the countries in the area were not united. Mr. Dulles replied that one reason lay in the fact that the French, when they ruled the area, wished to have a number of separate countries." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, August 1; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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191. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 6, 1958—8:24 p.m.

184. Your 252.[2]

1. Agree analysis reftel.

2. First sentence final paragraph Deptel 168[3] reflects our desire obtain new government of maximum effectiveness and avoid either weakening potential young elements or lessening their confidence in

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–558. Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Corcoran; cleared by Kocher, Jenkins, and Parsons; and approved by Robertson. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 252, August 5, the Embassy concluded that the major obstacle to Souvanna Phouma forming a government was the refusal of young elements of the CDNI to serve in his cabinet. Smith requested further instructions from the Department as to whether or not he should encourage these young elements to refuse to participate in a Souvanna Phouma government. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] This sentence of telegram 168, August 2, reads as follows:

Continued

U.S. It does not indicate we intend encourage younger elements attempt coup at this time rather than enter government as now suggested by Souvanna.

3. It appear to us events now in stage of achievement cabinet headed by Souvanna, made up of deputies and technicians in about equal proportions. It is understood maximum effectiveness such a government requires inclusion more new faces than old and assurance some key ministries under young leaders. However actual numerical superiority of new faces over old not indispensable requirement especially if some sound elements included among old faces. Only if this parliamentary solution fails of achievement or long drawn out government crisis develops would we seriously consider pros and cons of government by crown in legal, constitutional but extra parliamentary action.

4. We are much disappointed Nouphat's dependence on and fidelity to Katay who to us represents past not future (Embtel 235).[4]

5. Since government now proposed by Souvanna seems best parliamentary solution obtainable you should encourage but not press young elements into joining. We assume such Souvanna government once formed would meet conditions numbered paragraph (2) your 248[5] concerning determination accomplish reforms and support from RPL, ANL, and younger elements.

Herter

"You [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] should ascertain exact position younger elements and if they are adamantly opposed to current Souvanna lineup avoid taking position directly opposed to them and in favor of Souvanna." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–3158; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In telegram 235, August 3, the Embassy reported that Nouphat had declined at least temporarily Souvanna's invitation to join the new government for fear of alienating his political following which was also subject to Katay's influence. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–358; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] In telegram 248, August 5, Smith stated that, if approached by Souvanna Phouma, he would decline to discuss personalities and would stress U.S. support for a reform-minded government that included younger Lao politicians. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–558; included in the microfiche supplement)

192. Editorial Note

On August 18, at 2 p.m. Vientiane time, the government of Phoui Sananikone was invested by a vote in the National Assembly of 29 in favor, 21 opposed, 8 not voting, and 1 abstention. The cabinet included the following:

Phoui Sananikone as Prime Minister and Minister of Planning, Public Works, and Telecommunications;

Katay Sasorith as Vice Premier and Minister of Interior and Defense;

Bong Souvannavong as Minister of Education, Public Health, and Cults;

Khamphan Panya as Minister of Foreign Affairs; and

Thao Leuam as Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. (Memorandum from Alfred leS. Jenkins to Walter S. Robertson, August 18; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1858)

At the 377th meeting of the NSC on August 21, in his briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security," Allen Dulles gave the following assessment of the Phoui Sananikone government:

"Turning to Laos, Mr. Dulles pointed out that a new compromise Cabinet had been formed which really pleased no one. While there had been no Communist penetration of the new Cabinet, it contained many old figures like Katay who were notoriously corrupt. There were also four representatives of the younger and more progressive politicians whose influence, unhappily, Mr. Dulles thought would not amount to much. The new Cabinet constituted neither a victory nor a defeat for our side. It was not likely, however, to prevent the further growth of pro-Communist influence in Laos, and the end result might well be a military coup to prevent a Communist take-over." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

193. Letter From the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Dillon) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Sprague)[1]

Washington, August 20, 1958.

DEAR MR. SPRAGUE: The Department of State is in general agreement with the conclusions on the Military Assistance Program in Laos discussed in your letter of July 22, 1958.[2]

We concur in the assessment of the key importance of the Lao National Army as the most effective governmental instrument in the country and in the importance of improving its training. Without question, the establishment of a MAAG would be the ideal solution of the problem of improving the Army's training. However the timing and means of eventually achieving this solution are directly dependent on the attitudes of a number of friendly powers whose continued cooperation is necessary for the achievement of our broader foreign policy objectives not only in Laos but throughout the world.

Thus, while we hope to be in a position to send regular officers into Laos for training purposes as soon as it is politically practicable to do so, we do not believe it would be in the interest of the United States to solve the immediate problem of increasing the efficiency of the Lao National Army at the expense of creating serious difficulties in our relations with Canada, France, India and perhaps Great Britain. At this time such a course would run the definite risk in Laos, Cambodia and, particularly, Viet-Nam of implying that we were now completely rejecting the Geneva Conference of 1954.

Our policy towards the International Commission for Control and Supervision of the Armistice in Laos has been to recognize the contribution made by that body towards the prevention of a resumption of hostilities while exercising our influence to prevent the Communists from exploiting it to extend their domination over Laos. This policy has included persuading and encouraging friendly powers, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom, to take the lead in bringing about the termination of the Commission's activities in Laos on July 19, 1958

[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698, 091.3 Laos. Secret. The Department of State copy of this letter indicates that if was drafted by Corcoran and was reviewed and slightly revised by James M. Wilson of the Office of the Special Assistant for Mutual Security Coordination in conjunction with the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs. Robertson sent the draft letter to Dillon under cover of a memorandum of August 19 with the recommendation that it be signed and sent. According to a note on the Department of State copy, the original of this letter was handcarried to Sprague on August 20. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/7–2958)

[2] Document 187.

despite the opposition of the Communist member. At the same time we have required and still require the cooperation of the same powers in finding a solution of the MAAG–TERM problem in Viet-Nam.

A marked increase in U.S. military activity in Laos following hard upon the termination of the International Commission's activities would embarrass and offend the friendly powers whose cooperation we continue to require. The Department of State believes that the problem of improving the effectiveness of United States military assistance to Laos can be managed successfully in the light of political developments including the termination of the International Commission's activities and the investiture of what it is hoped will be a strong anti-Communist government in Laos. In this regard the Department of State has recently concurred in the creation of five new positions in the Program Evaluation Office and has expressed its readiness to authorize temporary duty assignments of regular military personnel to Laos in individual cases in which the advantages to the United States outweigh the disadvantages. Two such temporary duty assignments to USIA were recently approved.

The French Military Mission in Laos recently accepted the employment of four American Mobile Training Teams and 72 Filipino contract technicians. The achievement of this new level of cooperation with the French Military Mission may represent a valuable contribution to improvement of the training of the Lao National Army. It also seems to indicate a somewhat greater possibility of French agreement to the eventual establishment of an American MAAG.

It does not appear that the Royal Lao Government will offer any serious opposition to the establishment of a MAAG responsible for both training and supply. However this aspect of the problem will require careful handling and some legal study in view of Prince Souvanna Phouma's unilateral reaffirmation on May 31, 1958 of the Lao Government's declaration at Geneva.[3] The last paragraph of that declaration reads: "During the period between the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam and the final settlement of that country's political problems the Royal Government of Laos will not request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel or in instructors, except for the purpose of its effective territorial defense and to the extent defined by the agreement on the cessation of hostilities." Article 6 of the Agreement reads: "With effect from the proclamation of the cease-fire the introduction into Laos of any reinforcements of troops or military personnel from outside Laotian territory is prohibited. Nevertheless, the French High Command may leave a specified number of French military personnel required for the training of the Laotian National Army in the territory of Laos; the strength of such personnel shall not

[3] See Document 180.

exceed one thousand five hundred (1,500) officers and non-commissioned officers." Article 8 reads: "The High Command of the French forces shall maintain in the territory of Laos the personnel required for the maintenance of two French military establishments, the first at Seno and the second in the Mekong valley, either in the province of Vientiane or downstream from Vientiane. The effectives maintained in these military establishments shall not exceed a total of three thousand five hundred (3,500) men." Souvanna Phouma made his May 31 statement to reassure the Polish member of the ICC after the latter had cited this declaration as a reason for the continued presence of the ICC in Laos.

Pending developments which may make the establishment of a regular MAAG practicable we are asking Ambassador Smith's views on the possibility of assigning to the PEO active officers in civilian clothes for temporary duty which might be extended should no serious political difficulties arise as a result of such assignments. Meanwhile, our only choice for the immediate future appears to be to continue strengthening the PEO as heretofore.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas Dillon

II. U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE PHOUI SANANIKONE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 1958–JULY 1959

194. Editorial Note

On September 10, Ambassador Smith commented on the suggestion of the Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral Felt, that since the International Control Commission had ceased operations in Laos, it was time to "re-examine the possibility of taking some action toward introducing a MAAG to support the ANL as circumstances permit." Felt envisioned a step-by-step approach geared to the political situation in Laos. The first step would be to assign a Brigadier General, supported by three military assistants, as a potential MAAG Chief. These officers could wear civilian clothes. (CINCPAC telegram 140327Z, August 14; Department of State, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1958) In his comments, Smith observed that while an openly acknowledged MAAG would provide the maximum support to the ANL, it would cause serious diplomatic difficulties for the United States in Laos and all of Southeast Asia, and it would also cause the Phoui government internal political problems. Therefore, Smith recommended that the most practical solution was to assign, as Program Evaluation Office replacements, active duty officers without reference to their military status. Smith thought that perhaps the French should be consulted at Paris, but not at Vientiane, nor should the Lao Government be informed. (Telegram 457 from Vientiane, September 10; *ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/9–1058) The Department of State concurred with Smith's suggestion. (Telegram 338 to Vientiane, September 12; *ibid.*)

The telegrams described are included in the microfiche supplement.

195. Memorandum From the Deputy Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Jenkins) to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, September 17, 1958.

SUBJECT

Briefing for Fitzgerald Meeting

CINCPAC believes that we need a "cold war plan" for Laos (CINCPAC 082216Z September 1958)[2] which:

a. identifies objectives;
b. conveys a sense of urgency;
c. organizes necessary effort;
d. details funds and logistics required;
e. is directed toward favorable outcome of late 1959 elections.

The program would be along the lines of the Ambassador's program preceding the May 4 elections which was supported by CINCPAC "Operation Booster Shot".

CINCPAC has recommended an inter-agency team be sent to Laos to assist the Ambassador in drawing up a plan and developing requirements for its implementation. CINCPAC suggests representatives from Washington and CINCPAC constitute this team.

Ambassador Smith agrees on the need for a carefully planned program if conservative elements are to succeed in the next election (Embtel 486),[3] but believes that the special program should be designed to come as far as possible within the framework of regular USOM and program operation. Ambassador Smith hoped (September 15) to present a preliminary outline of program and personnel requirements within a few days. This has not yet been received.

There is as yet no inter-agency position on the cold war planning, but it will be the subject of the SEA–OCB Working Group meeting next week.[4] in case you should have any questions. We hope to receive Ambassador Smith's outline program before the meeting.

Elden Erickson and I shall be available at the meeting

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 300 General US Govt Attitudes and Action. Confidential. Drafted by Elden B. Erickson of SEA.

[2] Not found, but it is discussed extensively in a memorandum from Brown to Smith, September 11. (Washington National Records Center, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 62 A 1698, 091.3 Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Dated September 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1558; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] No record of this meeting has been found.

196. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 29, 1958—8 p.m.

584. CINCPAC for POLAD. Reference Embtel 576.[2] Am seeing Crown Prince morning thirtieth. Understand [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that purpose of interview probably to obtain moral support through fresh assurances by mere continued firmness US intent, provided monetary reform instituted promptly, to assist Laos in its fight against Communism despite recent US action in suspending aid.[3] We understand he is already familiar with terms proposed monetary agreement and is willing support it, but needs encouragement to play for first time active open role if necessary to ensure reform without endangering government.

Department will recall Crown Prince's request shortly after May election for unequivocal statement that US will help Laos maintain independence and will not permit small minority to take over country against will of people (Embtel 1925, paragraph 4).[4] Feeling of insecurity which then pervaded country, as result revelation extent NLHX control over voters, is evidently reasserting itself as consequence suspension US aid and uncertainty as to US long-range intentions towards Laos.

At time first request by Crown Prince Department advised me that statement such as he desired difficult to make at that juncture and perhaps not advisable until Lao had taken some concrete step under his leadership to show they would face up to situation. I believe certain steps which have since been taken by Lao (unification conservative parties, organization of the CDNI, and formation Phoui government with important participation latter and exclusion of Communists) and above all monetary reform now about to be undertaken now warrant Department's re-examination possibility of giving desired assurances. I believe that if I could give such a message from Secretary Robertson at time series of political steps mentioned above are

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/9–2958. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated to Paris, London, and CINCPAC.

[2] In telegram 576, September 28, Smith reported a private conversation with Phoui in which Phoui asked for a guarantee of support of the constitutional monarchy, a strategic guarantee in the event of war against Laos, continued U.S. aid, and "steadfast moral and material support" for anti-Communist action. Smith recommended some gesture of assurance to Phoui. (*Ibid.*, 851J.13/9–2858; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] The decision to suspend aid payments was communicated to the Lao Government on July 9; see footnote 2, Document 182 and Document 184.

[4] See footnote 3, Document 173.

crowned by exchange of notes constituting agreement on monetary reform, we could perform signal service to Phoui and Crown Prince at this critical moment.

Smith

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197. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 29, 1958—8:17 p.m.

410. Embtels 576, 584.[2]

1. We appreciate Lao constant need assurances and we desire afford Crown Prince and Phoui all possible support. However we would not wish at this time give blanket US endorsement this or any other government Laos in light prevailing uncertainties political scene. Such assurances might also reduce pressures which now apply Lao leadership in direction unified non-Communist effort develop popular support and prevent Communist takeover.

2. You authorized on occasion exchange notes constituting monetary reform agreement[3] deliver orally following message from Secretary Dulles to Crown Prince: (which may be repeated Phoui at your discretion) (*Verbatim Text*) "I have asked Ambassador Smith to assure Your Royal Highness personally that the United States continues fully to support, as in the past, effective efforts of the Kingdom of Laos to maintain its security. As I informed Your Royal Highness in June 1956 the United States stands firmly behind its commitments in SEATO to the nations of free Asia. As Your Royal Highness knows the SEATO powers unanimously included the Kingdom of Laos in the protocol of the SEATO treaty for purposes of Article IV. The present government of Laos has clearly proclaimed its determination to protect the national interests of the Kingdom against Communist subversion and its ac-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/9–2858. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Corcoran; cleared by SEA, FE, FE/L, and Dulles; and approved by Robertson. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, London, and Paris.

[2] Telegram 584 is *supra*. Regarding telegram 576, see footnote 2 thereto.

[3] By exchange of notes and a signature of a protocol, the Lao and U.S. Governments agreed on monetary reform on September 30. (Memorandum from Kocher to Parsons, October 6; Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, United States/Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

tions to date augur well its success in achieving that high purpose. The United States is prepared to continue its wholehearted moral and material support to such a government." (*End Verbatim Text*)

3. FYI. Assurances para two above reiterate those given by Secretary in personal message to Crown Prince Deptel 1260, June 8, 1956.[4] End FYI.

Dulles

[4] For text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XXI, pp. 773–774.

198. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 4, 1958—11 a.m.

616. Department pass CINCPAC for POLAD.

1. Secretary's Message.[2]

I delivered Secretary's message to Crown Prince morning 3rd and Prince expressed his appreciation for Secretary's assurances. He stated Crown had always sought to give Laos a government conscious of dangers confronting country, that new elements had been introduced in present government under pressure of public opinion demanding change and that if this government could pursue its present course of action, it could achieve goals which are "approved by Dulles".

2. Possible Government Crisis.

When I asked him whether in his view Phoui government would now weather the current dangers of Assembly opposition, Prince answered if monetary reform implemented on 13th and Assembly recessed on 11th, there would be two days of leeway. He recognized that number of Deputies including Assembly President were seeking to prolong session and stated problem remained essentially one of unity of Rally of Lao [People] which held majority of Assembly seats. He then terminated by saying, however, he "felt certain that if crisis occurred it would not be long" and he hoped "that the situation resulting from such crisis, if it occurred, might actually be an improved one." When I asked for clarification of this statement, Prince laughed and admitted he intentionally being cryptic. In context it seemed prob-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–458. Secret. Repeated to London, Saigon, Paris, Bangkok, and Phnom Penh.

[2] See *supra*.

able to me that his remark could be interpreted as meaning that Prince had reconciled himself to contemplation solution any possible risks in near future by extra-constitutional means.

3. General Elections.

Prince declared that Crown would always have friendly attitude toward US regardless of future circumstances or developments. He considered it his duty, therefore to advise me re eventual developments as he saw them. With regard to next general elections he stated that Crown had refused to accept postponement of one year as proposed by certain Deputies. He said that politically he did not consider prolongation of Deputies' mandate would change things, that population was not happy with this Assembly. He then asserted that present Deputies of Rally except for few would not be re-elected. He himself had asked the "young and others" to participate in the next campaign but he mentioned this subject because the "old parties" would ask the Embassy for help. He considered choice of candidates most important because in his view NLHX did not have broad backing in country and could be defeated by appropriate list of candidates. He then stated that "we are not remaining inert in spite all appearances" and that new list of possible candidates was being prepared to try out on people to obtain their reactions.

In answer to my specific question he confirmed that general elections were to be held December 1959 and that new proposed electoral law provided that campaign would start four months before, i.e. August 1959. Prince pointed out that the "national parties" were still powerful and that creation of a single list might prove difficult. He added, however, that before next elections "new parties and rallies" might be organized. What counted, Prince emphasized, was that large victory be gained over NLHX candidates who actually represented only small minority of population. He fully concurred in my suggestion that it was most important that a single list of candidates be picked in time for their names to be popularized. He pointed out, however, that it was difficult for Crown to openly patronize or help select any particular list of candidates. I again expressed to him our high confidence in the accuracy of his judgment and an intense interest in having the advantage of any suggestions or comments he might have to make with regard to the composition of a list of possible candidates. He promised to bear this in mind and remarked that he would always be pleased to see and talk to me. Finally he mentioned that the proposed new electoral law permitted army officers to run for election. He recognized that the introduction of the army into politics raised a serious problem but felt that under present circumstances no method for fighting NLHX could be eliminated.

Comments: I was struck by complete rejection by the Prince of all but a very few of the Deputies of the Rally, counter-balanced by his warm endorsement of the "new elements" in the government. Without ever mentioning the CDNI, it appeared clear that he was indicating that the committee and its associates, both army and civilian, offer in his opinion the best hope. I was further struck by his evident equanimity in contemplating the possibility of a new government crisis at an early date. It is difficult to understand why he is so confident that a better government from our point of view and his would result from such a crisis and that crisis would be short unless he has accepted the views of certain members CDNI who have always held that only extra-constitutional methods could under present circumstances give country kind of government it needed. I believe that the Prince's solid backing of the Phoui government and his apparent willingness to see a crisis through is an important factor in present situation, and may be determining element of this government's continued survival.

Smith

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199. Notes on the Meeting of the Operations Coordinating Board, Washington, October 8, 1958[1]

[Here follow agenda items 1–6.]

7. Laos—Oral Briefing by Mr. J. Graham Parsons

The Board requested this briefing since the rapidly changing developments in the key monetary reform negotiations had made a written report impractical. Mr. Parsons gave a thorough review of the present status of the current situation in Laos which, while "precarious", reflects "substantial achievement" by the U.S. He adverted to the strategic importance of Laos and highlighted the advances made since Geneva. He noted that we have a friendly government although there are Communists in the Assembly, that the French have been cooperating with us since the May 1958 elections and that most of the educated class now believes the Pathet Lao to be a Communist. He also noted that the government is in danger of being overthrown by a

[1] Source: Department of State, OCB Files: Lot 62 D 430, Preliminary Luncheon Notes III. Secret. Drafted by Jeremiah J. O'Connor, Operations Coordinator in the Office of the Under Secretary. Kocher sent Parsons a briefing paper, dated October 8, for use at this meeting. (*Ibid.*, FE Files: Lot 60 D 90, OCB and NSC 1958; included in the microfiche supplement)

conjunction of the Communists and corrupt politicians.[2] The government should seek more support from the rural areas, which voter segment is of great importance.

The significance of the September 30, 1958 agreement on monetary reform was explained and ways toward greater effectiveness of future U.S. aid shown. He suggested that, if the U.S. evidences its support of Laos in a subtle and organized way, our objectives can be more nearly assured. He urged that some gesture, probably by way of a direct dollar grant, be made now by the U.S. so that Prime Minister Phoui can point to it as evidence of continued U.S. support. As to the new monetary reform agreement, Mr. Parsons said that the Prime Minister had presented it to the cabinet but did not plan to send it to the assembly which is due to adjourn shortly. In commenting on the agreement, he said the old rate of 35 to 1 had been replaced by one of 80 to 1 and that the terms of the agreement were more favorable than those to which the U.S. would have been willing to accede.

Mr. Smith (ICA) said that Mr. Allen (USIA) at an NSC meeting had recommended against direct grants of this nature since they often have an effect of increasing apprehension and unhealthy conjecture in the recipient nation. Mr. Smith asked if the U.S. is at such a state in Laos that we can show our moral support only by use of a check. Mr. Parsons replied that all who have worked closely with the problem in the Embassy and in Washington, including ICA, have urged the grant be made as a reflection of U.S. approbation of recent Lao efforts.

Mr. Irwin (Defense) suggested that an inter-agency team from Washington should go to Laos and assist the Embassy in planning for the next national elections (December 1959 or later) by identifying objectives, organizing the U.S. effort and laying logistics plans. He said he had the impression that this would help the understaffed Embassy. Mr. Parsons said that the opinion of the Ambassador on this CINCPAC suggestion had been asked but no reply yet received. He emphasized the desirability of Embassy guidance should it be determined that such a team could help.

[Here follow the remaining agenda items.]

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[2] Memorandum of conversation between Corcoran and Phoui Sananikone, October 7. (Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/10–758; included in the microfiche supplement)

200. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 26, 1958—2 p.m.

752. Department pass CINCPAC POLAD for information. Department pouch London, Paris. Reference Deptel 482.[2]

1. Phoui government's first two months in office are insufficient to give full evaluation of its capabilities because of:

A. Its overriding preoccupation with monetary reform;
B. The prolonged Assembly debate which absorbed much of Prime Minister's time; and
C. Extended absence of Katay during this period as well as shorter absence of two CDNI Cabinet members, Khamphan Panya and Sisouk.

2. Nevertheless Phoui has given proof of political courage and exceptional tactical ability in pushing through unpopular measures, of willingness to cooperate with US and of coming to grips with important problems of country.

3. He has shown himself willing and able to cooperate with CDNI members and give them the mature leadership required to afford them an opportunity to work towards ends for which Committee was created. While Rally of Lao People has not given any indications of trying to develop itself and evolve more strongly as a live political organization, CDNI has displayed a certain vitality which if upheld may turn it into a most important anti-Communist political grouping within next few months.

4. Of other Cabinet members, Minister Education Bong appears very friendly to us and I believe we can work with him. Secretaries State for Defense Khoranok has proven himself a positive element in Cabinet, although it not sure how much scope Minister Defense Katay will grant him. As foreseen, Secretaries State Liep, Tan and Pan carry virtually no weight and cannot be expected to play role of any consequence. While Cabinet admittedly technically weak, believe it can be shored up, as Phoui has himself suggested by appointment certain of former more able Ministers as administrators of major programs such as rural development.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 851J.13/10–2658. Secret. Repeated to Phnom Penh, Saigon, Bangkok, Manila, and Hong Kong.

[2] In telegram 482, October 17, the Department of State requested the Embassy's analysis of immediate and long-range prospects of the Phoui government with reference to the next general elections in Laos. The information was to be used in interagency planning in Washington for future U.S. policy toward Laos. (*Ibid.*, 851J.13/10–1658; included in the microfiche supplement)

5. Government will almost certainly survive this session of Assembly so that there now appears to be good prospects it will continue in office until next normal session beginning May 11, when parliamentary game and whetted appetites of those out of office will probably again place its existence in jeopardy. (However, were serious dissensions to divide Cabinet, Assembly may be constitutionally recalled at request its Standing Committee.)

6. Possible stumbling block to continuing unity of Cabinet under Phoui remains Katay. As he has been away large part of period, his attitudes toward this government and his role within it have not yet been defined. If he proves a maverick, survival this government will be in doubt; but if he proves willing to work within its framework, as at least he apparently has been on monetary reform, this Cabinet may well be one with which US can most fruitfully work right through until next elections. Two big questions will be (1) whether it can survive after Assembly reconvenes and (2) whether through its accomplishments and political sagacity it can place itself in a position to provide and enforce the most effective possible single slate for the next elections.

7. If next general elections are held in December 1959 as proposed at present, dry season, which is now beginning will be last during which certain types of development work (i.e., roads) can be undertaken before start of electoral campaign. Therefore if Phoui's anti-Communist Cabinet is to give country benefits of good government sufficient to win and hold loyalty Lao people against Communism, decisions on programs in various fields—rural development, public works, education, etc., must be taken now and work on these programs started as soon as possible. These programs are dependent on US guidance, encouragement and support. Therefore it imperative that at this juncture US representatives be prepared to come forth boldly and imaginatively to make it possible for Phoui government to point at end of this dry season to appreciable concrete accomplishments, as proof that an anti-Communist RLG can achieve results and that cooperation with US remains best policy.

8. In sum while Phoui government still presents uncertainties, it gives us our best fighting chance for the next six months at least and indeed offers us good reason to hope that it or a similar successor government can win out against a legal Communist takeover in the next elections. However it is certain that unless US is prepared to give it timely continuing and adequate support, and above all encouragement and confidence that it can hope to succeed, it will fail in its task. It is therefore recommended that in counting the necessary cost in terms of political and administrative inconvenience as well as dollars,

of such current all-out support as will be required to win, we constantly bear in mind the added costs we would inevitably face elsewhere in SEA if Communists take over Laos in next elections.

9. More detailed assessment of Phoui government's performance to date being transmitted Department through other channels.[3]

Smith

[3] Not further identified.

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201. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 21, 1958—noon.

900. Department pass CINCPAC for POLAD. In conversation 19th I asked Phoui for his estimate political situation, particularly in regard potential threats to stability his government. Following is summary his estimate:

Rally has decided in favor special Assembly session January 15 to permit adoption new electoral law and other urgent legislation (establishment of administrative tribunals, regulation of mining and exploration). Another matter which gives concern is question of whether elections due December 24 or 25 should be postponed one year. According Phoui, postponement could be effected by obtaining royal ordinance extending terms of present deputies from four years to five, thus bring terms into harmony with amendment to constitution prescribing five-year terms. Motive for postponement would be to enable RLG and Rally to make adequate preparations, and sufficiency of preparations will depend in large degree on how far and how effectively village aid program will have progressed. This question would have to be given serious reflection by both Lao and American authorities. Assembly may otherwise remain in session from January 15–June 15 to give Rally enough time to campaign for December elections, which they would not consider they had if session was to run from May 11–October 11.

If motion of no confidence should also be introduced in January session it will be defeated, provided Rally caucus determines by two-thirds majority to support government, thereby binding all Rally mem-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2158. Top Secret.

bers to oppose motion in Assembly vote. If two-thirds majority not obtained in caucus vote, some ex-Ministers who rankle under loss of power and prestige might support NLHX in Assembly and place government in minority. However caucus two-thirds majority safe so long as Katay remains loyal. No present grounds for supposing he will not; his arbitrary behavior in regard promotions and assignments police and ANL personnel and his intemperate telegram on protection Air Laos monopoly ([*document number not declassified*])[2] reflect his mercurial character rather than any sinister purpose. As for Rally deputies, majority would prefer avoid Cabinet crisis which would probably last long time and thus deprive them of needed time to mend political fences in own districts. Hence principal source of danger remains possibility defection by ex-Ministers.

In event opposition with support ex-Ministers should defeat government on no-confidence issue in January special session. Phoui saw four possible courses of action:

(1) Resignation government, accepted by Crown. Crown should then designate as candidate person who (A) had best chance investiture (B) would be likely continue fundamental national policies and (C) would be likely have confidence of American authorities. Hence Crown would probably designate Phoui himself, who, however, would be faced by two groups of would-be ministers, those stemming from previous Cabinets and those in present Cabinet, and his chances of success would be very slim. If Crown wished put quick end to crisis it would be obliged designate man who could obtain support from nearly every party, such as Pheng Phongsavan. To do so, however, would be to disregard foregoing qualifications (B) and (C) at critical time in Lao history.

(2) Government might refuse to resign and instead ask Crown to dissolve Assembly. This would entail new elections within 90 days, for which RLG has had insufficient time to prepare.

(3) In event crisis appears imminent in January, Crown might convoke national congress composed of all members Assembly and King's Council (in pursuance constitution Article 43) to amend constitution by creating second category of Crown-appointed Deputies, as in Thailand. Since congress would embrace 59 Deputies and 12 Councilors, two-thirds majority required for amendment would have to be made up of all 37 Rally Deputies and all Councilors, less one or two possible defectors. To avoid this narrow margin, such amendment might be preceded by another more easily obtained, reducing number of congress votes required for amendment constitution to simple majority. Idea of second category Deputies would appeal to many present

[2] Not further identified.

Deputies who fear defeat in next election. Crown might actually appoint only enough second category Deputies to ensure control Assembly by conservative majority.

(4) Revolutionary solution, which has attraction of simplicity but which should most certainly not be availed of hastily; rather RLG should be prepared to make use of it only if no other solution practicable. It would permit elimination not only enemies of state, but of opponents of RLG both in Assembly and in Rally itself. Under this solution, RLG would obtain early agreement from ANL officers to create at proper time revolutionary committee composed of responsible military officers and public servants. Within three or four days after vote of no-confidence, committee would announce that coup had taken place, that Assembly and political parties dissolved, constitution annulled, and all political and military authority restored to Crown. (In theory, Crown recovers all powers which under present constitution are now being exercised by RLG.) Crown would then nominate various individuals to carry out such powers in various capacities. This solution, if it could be carefully enough planned and effectively supported, Phoui considers the most satisfactory from point of view of efficiency and as having added advantage of enabling RLG to cut links between NLHX headquarters and NLHX provincial cells, since NLHX along with other political parties would become illegal. However possible counteractions or reactions would also have to be carefully assessed.

Phoui concluded with remark that he did not present any of four "solutions" to me as a proposition, but rather as matter for reflection. I said that I would communicate his analysis to Washington, and refrained from any comment on merits. He said in such case he would like to reduce his analysis to memorandum form and promised to give it to me by November 25.[3] If he does so, it will be transmitted verbatim to Department.

Smith

[3] Phoui gave Smith the memorandum on November 27. It is summarized in telegram 924 from Vientiane, November 30. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–3058; included in the microfiche supplement) The verbatim text was pouched to the Department but has not been found.

202. Editorial Note

At the 392d meeting of the National Security Council, December 23, Allen Dulles touched upon Laos in his briefing, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." His remarks read as follows:

"Mr. Dulles noted that in Laos drastic changes in the government will be required if the Pathet Lao element is to be restrained. A showdown with Communist elements might be in the offing in this country. The President inquired about Communism in the Laotian Army. Mr. Dulles thought the top leadership of the Army was anti-Communist." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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203. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, December 29, 1958.

SUBJECT

PEO's New Plan for Supporting Lao National Army

Discussion:

General Heintges, new chief of the PEO in Laos, has prepared a plan[2] for support of the Lao National Army which involves a complete reorganization of the PEO and a marked increase in the number of American active duty personnel in Laos.

This plan includes strengthening of the PEO, improvement of the ANL logistical condition and U.S. participation in the training of the ANL. General Heintges' plan has the general approval of Ambassador Smith and of the French Ambassador in Vientiane as well as the chief of the French military mission. We understand it is currently being considered by the French authorities in Paris. It envisages close Franco-American cooperation and utilization of existing French assets in the way of personnel, bases and political position.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, Memoranda concerning increase in PEO Staff Laos. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared in draft with L/FE.

[2] Dated December 13. (Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 091.3 Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

Briefly, the plan envisages increasing the total strength of PEO from 96, including 56 Americans, to 128, including 66 Americans.

	Officer	*EM*	*Civilian*	*Local*	*Total*
Current Authorization	10	1	45	40	96
Proposed	18	10	38	62	128

The plan also calls for the assignment of a total of 96 American military personnel in 12 mobile training teams for a period of 6 months. These teams would operate ostensibly as a ramification of the French military mission. The plan also calls for 5 military mobile teams totaling 15 American enlisted men to supervise the work of Filipino technicians. In other words, it is envisaged that 128 additional American military be sent to Laos over and above these now authorized, a net increase of over ten fold (1000 per cent) for a minimum period of 6 months. The time phasing of the entry of the proposed additional personnel is not yet clear.

OSD estimates the execution of the various aspects of General Heintges' plan will require some three to three and one-half million dollars in additional funds. However, reconciliation of the elements of this plan with the elements of existing programs for FY 1959 and FY 1960 may reduce this figure considerably and Defense is now working on the problem.

I believe that General Heintges' analysis of the situation of the ANL is a sound one in view of his professional competence and the endorsement of Ambassador Smith. The principal problem it presents for a Department decision is represented by the proposed introduction of 128 additional personnel resulting in a total of some 139 active duty American military personnel in Laos. We have already asked Ambassador Smith's views on the political acceptability of the introduction of such personnel in the light of the interest of the ICC powers, the current political trend in Laos, and probable Chicom and Vietnamese Communist reaction.

Assuming that Ambassador Smith's views favor introduction of this large number of active military personnel, our problem will be to minimize adverse reactions from the Chicoms and Vietnamese Communists as well as from the ICC powers, notably the Canadians. The problem is complicated by the fact that the RLG although insisting on the departure of the ICC nevertheless, at Canadian suggestion, unilaterally reiterated its declaration at Geneva concerning articles 4 and 5 of the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference:

"During the period between the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam and the final settlement of that country's political problems, the Royal Government of Laos will not request foreign aid, whether in war

material, in personnel or in instructors, except for the purpose of its effective territorial defence and to the extent defined by the agreement on the cessation of hostilities."

Since Chapter 2 of the Geneva Agreement on Laos which concerns the prohibition of the introduction of fresh troops, makes an exception only in the case of French military personnel and French military establishments, it would be difficult to make a legal interpretation permitting the introduction of American military personnel under this Chapter. However, the U.S. as a non-signatory of the Geneva Accords views the questions of actions to be taken by Laos relating to the Geneva Accords almost entirely from a political rather than legal point of view. We have felt that the sovereign RLG's views as to the Accords being terminated and its wishes as to future action should be respected and this continues to be our feeling. I believe that we could as a practical matter carry out the new PEO plan either by assuming that no Geneva Accords question arises, or by consulting in advance with the Geneva powers. Our best chance of carrying out the new plan without provoking an unacceptable political reaction might be by taking the following steps and informing other powers after the event:

1. The Lao and French Governments should request U.S. assistance to augment the French military mission and the French military establishments provided for under articles 6 and 8 of the Geneva Agreement on Laos, pleading French inability to meet commitments for training the ANL without such assistance.

2. The RLG should make a statement to all neighboring countries to the effect it desires to increase the ANL's efficiency in discharging its internal responsibilities for internal security, police action, disaster relief, and civic action. It should point out it has no intention of increasing the ANL's capacity with reference to external security and that each neighboring country already possesses clearly superior armed forces. The RLG statement should point out that Laos which has already reduced its army by almost one-third since Geneva and its war potential in an even greater proportion intends to reduce the size of its army even further when its internal problems have become sufficiently mastered. The Laos statement should declare that there has been no change in Lao foreign policy and express a desire for continued peaceful relations with all its neighbors. It should state that Laos sees no need for military alliances or the establishment of bases other than those provided for in the Geneva Accords.

3. The U.S. should inform the UK, the USSR, India, Canada, and Poland, not in the context of the Geneva machinery but simply as Governments interested in Laos, that:

(a) We are seeking to increase the effectiveness and reduce the cost of our military assistance to Laos.

(b) We are responding to a request for assistance from the Lao and French Governments. (As of the moment, the French reaction to the Heintges plan is not clear. If French concern re the introduction of so many additional military personnel into Laos precludes their asking the U.S. for assistance, we may have to act solely on a unilateral Lao request.)

(c) We do not intend to increase the external war potential of Laos and we will not in any event permit our military aid to Laos to be used for aggressive purposes.

Note: It is, of course, likely that if we introduce American military personnel into Laos we will find it much more difficult, if not impossible, to persuade the Canadians and the Indians to acquiesce in the raising of the MAAG ceiling in Viet-Nam. The termination of the ICC's activities in Laos creates a different situation in that country from the one existing in Viet-Nam. Nevertheless, the Indians and Canadians are likely to take an overall view of our actions and to fear that North Viet-Nam will read aggressive intentions into them and perhaps react strongly. In other words, we may be forced to choose between increasing the MAAG ceiling in Viet-Nam or General Heintges' plan in Laos if we wish to get the concurrence of the Canadians and the Indians. If we should decide that concurrence of these countries is not necessary, then of course we will be able to push ahead with both programs in Laos and Viet-Nam.

Recommendation:

1. That, if we decide to choose between our programs in Laos and Viet-Nam, we choose the former as being the most urgent.

2. That, subject to Ambassador Smith's favorable views, we inform Defense: We approve the new PEO plan and authorize the staggered admission of the additional U.S. military personnel specifically described therein with the understanding that they will wear civilian clothing and conduct themselves as members of the Civilian Supervisory Group (PEO) and that they may be withdrawn if political circumstances so require.

204. Editorial Note

The Country Team in Laos had agreed on December 8 that a pay increase for the Lao National Army was justified. Admiral Felt recommended that the increase come out of other reductions in the Military Assistance Program for Laos. On January 2, 1959, Chief of the Program Evaluation Office, Brigadier General John A. Heintges, met with Secretary of Defense Katay to agree on reductions so that the pay raise could be funded. (PEO telegram 47–59, January 10, 1959; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5512/1–1059) The Department of State and the International Cooperation Administration had cabled the Embassy in Vientiane on January 8 to complain that they had no prior advice on this question and stated that they saw no basis for such an increase. They maintained that the ANL was already the highest paid group in Laos and an increase would have a chain reaction among other government employees which could only exacerbate inflationary pressures in Laos. Furthermore, the U.S. Congress was already highly critical of the assistance program in Laos and such an increase would incur additional Congressional disfavor. (Telegram 819 to Vientiane, January 8; *ibid.*, 751J.5512/1–859)

In PEO telegram 47–59, Heintges responded that the Lao regional military commanders had already been told on January 5 that they and their troops were going to get a pay raise and argued that the Lao soldier was not overpaid in the light of recent inflation in Laos. Heintges feared a loss of effectiveness and morale in the ANL if the raise was disallowed. Ambassador Smith, who was in Hong Kong, stated that Phoui feared that failure to grant a pay raise at this stage would subject his government to a possible military coup. Smith stated that he approved the pay increase, subject to Washington's review, so long as the total military assistance budget did not increase. (Telegram 1072 from Hong Kong, January 11; *ibid.*, 751J.5512/1–1159)

On January 12, the Department of State and the International Cooperation Administration granted Smith permission to release funds which would include a pay raise because of the adverse consequences which would flow from a repudiation of commitments made to the Lao Government before the issue was brought to Washington's attention. Nevertheless, they did not concur in the pay raise. (Telegram 834 to Vientiane, January 12; *ibid.*)

205. Editorial Note

On January 12, 1959, Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone addressed a special session of the Lao National Assembly. In an hour-long speech, he recounted the accomplishments of his government since its coming to power in August 1958, described the dangerous situation it now faced because of alleged border incidents which had taken place with North Vietnam in December 1958, and declared that Laos was with its "friends" in the "great ideological combat which divides present world." Phoui then presented for the Assembly's approval a series of measures to deal with the threats he described. The action program outlined by Phoui Sananikone included constitutional reform, land and village community development, intensification of general economic development, free and independent neutrality in foreign affairs, and improvements in the National Army and public services. Phoui asked for special powers to implement this plan. The National Assembly approved these special powers and the action plan on January 14. (Telegram 1225 and 1241 from Vientiane, January 12 and 14; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–1259 and 751J.00/1–1459) In telegram 1302 from Vientiane, January 27, the Embassy provided an extensive analysis of these developments. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–2759) Telegram 1302 is included in the microfiche supplement.

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206. Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific's Political Adviser (Steeves) to the Department of State[1]

Honolulu, January 15, 1959—3:45 p.m.

Polad 45. Personal for Robertson and Ambassador Smith from Steeves. Perplexing status of our actions and policies for Laos make it increasingly difficult to provide political guidance to CINCPAC. Question of continued adherence to Geneva Accords by Laos (and to their spirit by U.S.) is key to our future posture and realistic planning in that country. I believe, therefore, time has come when we must seriously study whether continue our seeming adherence to spirit agreements or whether adopt official position setting aside Geneva Accords in their

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751H.5-MSP/1–1659. Secret; Limited Distribution. Repeated to Vientiane.

application to Laos, reach understanding with Laos to this effect, organize argumentation in support such decision and agree on program and policies pursuant such action.

For what it is worth, I have, after careful reflection, concluded that U.S. interests best served by unequivocal stance by RLG (backed by U.S. taking same stand) that Geneva Accords no longer applicable to Laos. This conclusion is based on belief that true nature our military assistance in Laos already known to all concerned (will be better known as program expands in near future), and that seeming acceptance spirit of Accords on one hand but violation on other does more violence our relations with friend and foe alike than setting Accords aside altogether. Pertinent to observe that there is some juridical basis for setting Accords aside but no defense for allegedly covert military assistance programs so long as we seemingly adhere to Accords. I wish also to note that present program, while indefensible in terms of Accords, at same time operates under restraints which seriously inhibit achievement essential goals.

Following suggested procedural approach to problem may provide basis for discussion Washington:

1. Laos officially adopt position:

(a) That country has been integrated pursuant to Armistice Agreement thus finally and completely terminating all applicability Geneva Accords to Laos;

(b) That regardless views of other nations this is Laos juridical determination.

(c) That Laos not prepared to accept interpretations or actions of other nations if they inconsistent RLG interpretations and Laos sovereignty.

2. Laos officially request U.S. military assistance.

3. U.S. take position that it is willing to comply with Lao request and, with respect Geneva Accords, feels obliged to accept decision and interpretation of Laos in matter affecting its own territory and touching so closely upon its sovereignty.

4. After making decision, play it in low key [as] possible making no announcements until international developments or confrontations so require. (First confrontation might well be ICC decision to visit Laos for investigation and RLG refusal permit entry for such purpose.)

5. U.S., as appropriate, also to clarify that (a) U.S. not a signatory of Geneva Accords, (b) U.S. assistance is only for the defense of Laos, (c) such assistance is clearly consistent with U.S. declaration following Geneva Accords that U.S. would refrain from threat or use of force to disturb the agreements, and (d) U.S. attitudes toward application Accords in Cambodia and Viet-Nam are unchanged but subject to review in light of the views of those nations.

6. U.S. and RLG clarify as appropriate extent of DRV violation of Accords in terms of military buildup for aggressive purposes.

7. Merely inform Canada and other friendly countries of our decision rather than seek acquiescence in step to which they would probably have great difficulty agreeing in advance.

8. Despite above decisions U.S. to move slowly in changing programs in Laos, initially continuing "civilian" status military mission and operating military assistance programs quietly until expected furor has died down and world has grown accustomed to new position and arrangements.

I am fully aware of provisions of voluntary declaration by Laos (Geneva Conference Document 1C/47)[2] and RLG reaffirmation in May 1958.[3] Believe, however, we could support RLG on position that main objective Accords for Laos was political reintegration, that achievement that political settlement invalidates all documents in Geneva Accords in their application to Laos and that sovereign nation always free to alter its unilateral declarations in light changing conditions epecially in the face of danger.

Possible that RLG will be reluctant agree proposed action for fear resumption armed subversion by NLHX. My view of this is that continued adherence Geneva Accords won't prevent it and that NLHX will expand underground operations at moment of its choosing in any event. RLG may, on the other hand, agree enthusiastically. Complete coordination between U.S. and RLG Governments obviously essential.

In view imminence and scale expansion U.S. military assistance I would hope that serious study this entire subject could be instituted on priority basis. Possible OICC investigation reported Saigon's 1361 (218 to Vientiane)[4] will provide convenient (perhaps essential) occasion make known new stance on Geneva Accords.

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[2] This declaration, July 21, is printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1952–1954, vol. XVI, p. 1543.

[3] See Document 180.

[4] Not found.

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207. Editorial Note

At the 393d meeting of the National Security Council on January 15, Allen Dulles gave the briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles reported on developments in Laos as follows:

"Meanwhile, continued Mr. Dulles, there had been important developments in neighboring Laos. There has been strong pressure by Communist elements in Laos under the control of Prince

Souphonuvong. The danger of a Communist take-over in Laos was growing daily and the Western-oriented elements in the country felt that strong measures were necessary if this trend were to be reversed. Apparently, incursions of Viet Minh forces had occured at a disputed area on the border between North Viet Minh [*Nam*] and Laos. Phoui, the Laotian Prime Minister, whom we regard as the best of the Western-oriented politicians, appeared before the Laotian Chamber on January 14 and obtained from that body full power to rule by decree for a period of twelve months. This consituted a most desirable development it if were properly followed up. On the other hand, the Viet Minh may react very strongly to Phoui's move and there may be a conjoining of the crises in Cambodia and Laos. The French were in general behaving very well in the face of the threat except that they are not at all disposed to welcome a U.S. military training mission." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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208. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 20, 1959—6 p.m.

1266. Department pass CINCPAC for Polad priority for information. Personal for Robertson, Felt and Steeves from Smith. Reference: Polad 45.[2] Heartily concur spirit and general lines your message which brings fresh look at situation at most opportune time. Having become increasingly uncomfortable over apparent necessity continuing covert action contrary letter Geneva accord, had hoped that with formation stable new Phoui government opportunity would soon arise to clarify anomalous situation and "legalize" proposed Heintges program. Events on frontiers in past few weeks seemed to offer just opportunity which RLG needs to clarify its position re Geneva agreements. In requesting special powers from assembly Phoui put forth as primary argument national danger arising from Viet Minh incursions and declared inter alia "government will undertake serious effort to raise efficiency of army by granting it better training as well as improvement and unification its matériel." Therefore I agree generally with your proposed approach and believe time has come for it so long as we keep in mind: (A) our allies' reaction, (B) international repercussions proposed operation and (C) internal reactions of NLHX and Viet

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2059. Secret; Priority; Limited Distribution. Received at 3:03 p.m.

[2] Document 206.

Minh. In sum gradual bringing US military MAAG into Laos must be carried out on strong legal basis, with broad agreement among free world powers and as smoothly and quietly as possible. These considerations condition the following proposed specific steps along your line of approach.

1. That I be authorized to suggest to Phoui he call in British, French, US Ambassadors to inform them RLG has decided to free itself unequivocally of any restrictions on Laos still imposed by Geneva agreements. Recent frontier incidents have brought into sharp focus untenable military posture of Laos. In its voluntary declaration at Geneva conference, reaffirmed in its letter of May 31, 1958 to ICC, Laos bound itself unilaterally to observe restrictive provisions of Geneva agreement until agreement on Viet Nam had been fulfilled. Hostilities have long ago ceased in Laos and the country unified under one sovereign government since November 1957 but there now seems no likelihood that unification of Viet Nam will occur in foreseeable future. Laos is thus placed in absurd position of remaining defenseless until solution is found to a foreign policy dispute to which it is not a party, for which it is not responsible and settlement of which it can neither influence nor hasten. Such a position is unbearable. No sovereign country can accept to bind itself indefinitely to position of not being able to defend its national territory. Therefore in view events past, Laos has now determined to denounce its unilateral declaration at Geneva and to recognize no longer any provision of Geneva agreements tending to restrict its sovereign right to undertake measures necessary to maintain adequate defense establishment. At same time Laos reaffirms emphatically its adherence to principles of UN Charter, its wholehearted adherence to peaceful policies and renews its assurances of having no aggressive intentions toward any of its neighbors.

2. Phoui would then request advice three Ambassadors on wording of RLG letter to co-chairmen along these lines and their suggestions as to best method of implementing RLG decision in such manner as to limit international repercussions to a minimum. We should then develop in our discussions with British and French a US position with respect Geneva accords along lines cited your paragraphs 3 and 5 and urge British and French support Lao position along lines your paragraphs 1a, b, c and 8 but with additional and, we think, even more cogent argument advanced by Phoui in his initial approach as outlined above.

3. Phoui would then write official letter to co-chairmen along lines RLG decided appropriate.

4. Phoui would then call in French and US Ambassadors and formally ask their governments to examine singly and jointly ways and means of stepping up their military assistance program.

5. In effect French and US Governments could then consult and upon RLG concurrence put immediately into effect Heintges plan overtly and legally.

6. I also heartily concur in playing these decisions in low key and in implementing decisions slowly. It may be hoped that new cabinet will be strongly pro-US and almost wholly responsive to our views. However, must point out that NLHX is on defensive and that new government with special powers may well deepen division within NLHX between moderate wing which believes in pursuing goals by legal means and extremist wing which believes military action required. If US build-up, particularly with military personnel, follows too swiftly RLG denunciation agreements, extremist NLHX wing might swing party to its views and persuade it to resort to insurgency. Too rapid development of an open uniformed MAAG might also be viewed by Viet Minh as threat necessitating counter actions along whole frontier. Result would be that new cabinet's energies would be absorbed in security problem to detriment of positive development program. If I understand paragraph 8 your message correctly, however, you also are proposing implementation initial phases Heintges plan under cover until time propitious for gradual surfacing military MAAG. I concur in this view and believe should develop line followed by Deptel 771 paragraph 4 A.[3]

7. In past Phoui and Khamphan Panya have expressed desire see termination applicability all restrictive provisions of Geneva agreements and other leaders civilian and military have also indicated hope for increased and improved military assistance program. During his stay in Laos Heintges discussed his plan with responsible defense leaders and found unanimous approval among them. I therefore foresee no difficulties in obtaining RLG agreement to approach proposed above.

8. If Paris telegram 2566 to Department[4] accurately reflects Quai d'Orsay views French Government may well agree to RLG position on Geneva agreements. Also fact RLG turns to France for such additional military aid as it willing to offer should help salve any negative French feelings at seeing US assume increased responsibilities for training ANL. To suggest RLG request exclusively US military assistance as per your paragraph 2 would seem to me create unnecessary friction with

[3] Dated December 30. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3058; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Telegram 2566, January 14, reported French Foreign Ministry arguments against reconvening the ICC in Laos and concluded: "Quai representative said Foreign Office believed any attempt force RLG accept new ICC could have dangerous internal consequences." (Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/1–1459)

French who in view present commitments elsewhere may not be even willing undertake additional military training effort in Laos suggested by local FMM under Heintges plan.

9. If we can obtain British and Canadian acquiescence to RLG's legal position on continued applicability Geneva agreements to Laos I cannot foresee their then putting forth serious objections to stepped-up military assistance program so long as introduction uniformed personnel not too massive or abrupt.

Smith

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209. Telegram From the Department of State to the Commander in Chief, Pacific's Political Adviser (Steeves)[1]

Washington, January 20, 1959—8:30 p.m.

865. Re Polad 45 (DTG 160145Z).[2] From Robertson.

1. United States as non-signatory Geneva Accords has consistently viewed question actions to be taken by RLG relating Accords almost entirely from political rather than legal point of view. We have felt moreover that sovereign RLG's views as to Accord being terminated and its wishes as to future action should be respected.

2. In considering method execution Defense (Heintges) plan, for improving support ANL, in politically acceptable manner given interest ICC powers, current political trend in Laos and probable Chicom and Vietnamese Communist reactions, we envisaged chain of events in which:

a. RLG and French Government would agree to U.S. assistance to augment enlarged French military mission and French military establishments Laos view French inability to meet commitments training ANL without such assistance;

b. RLG informing neighboring countries via press and radio it desired increase ANL efficiency in discharge internal responsibilities for security, police action, disaster relief, civic action, pointing out no intention increase ANL capacity in relation external security and noting each neighboring country already possessed clear military superiority;

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/1-2059. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Corcoran; cleared in SEA, FE, and EUR/BNA; and approved by Robertson. Repeated to Vientiane.

[2] Document 206.

c. RLG inviting attention to reduction by one-third in size of Army since Geneva and even greater reduction in war potential;

d. RLG making clear no change in foreign policy contemplated and continued peaceful relations desired with all neighbors;

e. U.S. in agreement RLG, informally notifying UK Co-chairman and friendly ICC power Canada, not in Geneva context, but as individual governments interested in Laos that U.S., seeking increase effectiveness and reduce cost military assistance, responding to French and RLG requests for additional assistance in training personnel which would not increase external war potential Laos and would not in any event be used for aggression.

3. In view importance French cooperation to execution Heintges plan as drawn, Department felt it essential obtain clarification French attitude. This clarification still pending. We realize French government's unwillingness cooperate might oblige us proceed on basis unilateral Lao request, in which case plan would have to be redrafted.

4. Consultation with Embassies, Ottawa, London, Paris, Saigon and Vientiane showed broad considerations affecting our relations with UK and Canada made it desirable approach those governments in advance in attempt obtain their acquiescence introduction large number active duty military personnel which would be de facto scrapping of Geneva machinery in Laos. As soon as French attitude clarified we plan approach UK and Canada to this effect. We do not expect or require firmal UK or Canadian approval before acting affirmatively on program. We do feel however that informing these friendly powers of our intentions in advance will minimize possible adverse effects our relations which could result should we act without their knowledge in matter in which they have heretofore cooperated closely. UK, Canada and France took initiative terminating ICC activities Laos and kept us fully informed their actions.

5. Appears Department thinking along essentially same lines your views set forth reftel. Grateful for your thoughtful presentation. Will keep you informed developments.

Dulles

210. Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy)[1]

Washington, January 29, 1959.

SUBJECT

The Situation in Laos

There follow my suggestions for your talk at the meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Friday. I shall be prepared to follow with a more detailed presentation on the situation in Laos.[2]

For the first time in years there is some reason to be encouraged by the trend of the situation in Laos. The principal problem in our relations with Laos since the cease-fire in the Indo-China war in 1954 has been assisting the Royal Government to overcome the internal Communist threat. Our basic policy has been to encourage and assist a strong non-Communist government to develop broad popular support which would enable it effectively to defend and strengthen its independence.

A related problem has involved encouraging and assisting the Royal Lao Government to resist external Communist pressure and enticements. Laos being a small and extremely weak country in both population and resources is naturally intimidated by the proximity of much more powerful Communist states, mainland China and North Viet-Nam, on its frontiers. It has been our policy by diplomatic means to try to sharpen the Lao Government's awareness of Communist intentions and to continue to try to prevent increased contacts with the Communist bloc while reassuring the Lao on the subject of Free World support.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2959. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared by Kocher.

[2] At the State–JCS meeting on January 30, Parsons summarized the situation in Laos, evaluated the current political prospects, and described U.S. proposals for action. In examining the Heintges plan, Parsons discussed proposals for removing the restrictions established by the 1954 Geneva Agreements by Lao Government renunciation of the agreements. He mentioned the difficulties with the French in this regard and the serious dangers inherent, but indicated that there appeared to be no alternative.

The Joint Chiefs did not comment on Parsons' presentation, but General Cabell added that CIA had a feeling of urgency on Laos. Cabell hoped that the United States could move ahead rapidly on the new proposals without administrative problems or delays. Parsons agreed and concluded by noting that the Indian Government was being difficult because of its interest as a member of the International Control Commission. Parsons said that the Canadian Government was being very helpful, but that the Canadians' assistance could only be secured as a result of close consultation and constructive suggestions from both sides. (*Ibid.*, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 61 D 417)

The execution of our policy in Laos has involved a constant expenditure of diplomatic effort as well as mutual security funds. We have had numerous disappointments and setbacks including the visit of the Lao Prime Minister to Peking and Hanoi in 1956, the conclusion of military and political agreements with the Communist Pathet Lao, more or less on Communist terms, in 1957, and the fiasco of the May 1958 supplementary elections in which the non-Communist elements won a majority of the popular vote but wasted it by running an excessive number of candidates and permitting the Communists and fellow travelers to win strong representation in the Nationl Assembly.

Since the strong showing of the Communists in the May 4 elections, however, a somewhat encouraging trend has set in. The non-Communist elements pulled themselves together sufficiently to install a strong government excluding Communists from participation and to come to grips with the monetary problem which was the root of those abuses of our aid program which aroused so much public and congressional comment. On January 14 of this year this government, following more or less the "De Gaulle" pattern achieved a vote of confidence in advance in the National Assembly which will enable it to rule effectively until December. It has also pledged constitutional reform which should enable Laos better to cope with the problem of internal Communist subversion and the underlying problem of economic development.

From the Free World's point of view events in Laos have taken a favorable turn but the problems remain enormous in relation to the ability of the Lao to cope with them and we continue to be confronted with formidable difficulties in the execution of our policy in Laos.

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211. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, February 4, 1959—7:27 p.m.

936. Your 1338.[2] Daridan February 4 informed Department French reaction Heintges' plan not favorable because participation US instructors not compatible Article 6 Geneva Accords or Souvanna

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–459. Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Corcoran and approved by Kocher. Repeated to Paris and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1338, February 4, Smith reported information from the French Ambassador in Laos similar to what Daridan told Department officials on February 4. (*Ibid.*)

Phouma's unilateral declaration of May 31, 1958. French proposed maintain wholly all their relationships Laos and would make own study ways and means improvement ANL and would keep US informed.

Parsons replied French reaction, if not complete surprise, severe disappointment. We were confronted practical problem finding remedy decreased efficiency and morale ANL resulting from diminution French Military Mission and passage time since ANL had combat experience. We believed Heintges' plan presented practical solution with which French in Laos in general agreement. Improvement ANL matter of considerable urgency.

We as well as RLG must face question of how long RLG can be kept in position of being slightly less than sovereign. Continued acceptance Geneva restrictions deprived independent Laos ability ensure defense along practical lines.

Parsons stressed argument based Article 6 not convincing since DRV and ChiComs possess overwhelming superiority and can fabricate provocation whenever they so desire. Recent events DRV–Laos border incline us believe provocation issue not a great one.

We must find solution ANL problem soon in order achieve object we all seek in Laos. We desire work with French toward this solution and our Military also desire cooperate with French. However we may anticipate difficulty obtaining MSP appropriations for Laos even under best circumstances. If we are confronted with necessity admit efficiency ANL does not permit fulfillment its mission despite our expenditure, effort and funds in past we may face increased danger to MSP appropriation which would threaten entire objective in Laos.

At your discretion you may use any of above arguments with Phoui without of course mention of French approach here, if it appears necessary to accelerate RLG action indicated Deptel 919[3] and Embtel 1325.[4]

Dillon

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[3] In telegram 919, January 30, the Department reiterated previous instructions that Smith approach Phoui along the lines of paragraphs 1–4 of Document 208. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–3059; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In telegram 1325, February 2, Smith informed the Department that he had already discussed paragraphs 1–4 of Document 208 with Phoui and Khamphan Panya, both of whom heartily concurred. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–259; included in the microfiche supplement)

212. Editorial Note

On February 8, Dillon Anderson, General J. Lawton Collins, Colonel Edward Lansdale, Colonel Victor Alden, Charles Wolf, Jr., and Joseph Reddick, all members of a subcommittee of the Draper Committee, arrived in Laos. The Committee was appointed by President Eisenhower on November 24, 1958, under the chairmanship of William H. Draper to undertake a "completely independent, objective, and non-partisan analysis" of the military assistance aspects of the U.S. Mutual Security Program. (Letter from Eisenhower to Draper; Department of State *Bulletin*, December 15, 1958, page 954)

The Anderson subcommittee held a formal conference with Lao Government officials on February 9 and had consultations with the Country Team in Vientiane. Reports of the conference and other activities of the subcommittee while in Laos are in telegram 1403 from Vientiane, February 13, and despatch 102 from Vientiane, March 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–1359 and 751J.5–MSP/3–359; both included in the microfiche supplement)

On February 9, Anderson and Collins, accompanied by Ambassador Smith, called on Crown Prince Savang. Savang used the occasion to reiterate the need for close regional cooperation in Southeast Asia to face the Communist threat and raised the question of a U.S. guarantee for Laos. (Telegram 1371 from Vientiane, February 10; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–1059; included in the microfiche supplement)

The Department of State informed the Embassy on February 20 that the Crown Prince's desire for a U.S. or SEATO guarantee of Lao frontiers reflected the "constant Lao need for assurances" which Secretary Dulles responded to on June 8, 1956 (see *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, volume XXI, pages 773–774), and September 29, 1958 (see Document 197). The Department would be willing to reassure the Royal Lao Government as it did before, but in view of the imprecise nature of the Lao border with North Vietnam and the complex history of border problems, a formal U.S. or SEATO guarantee was impractical. The Department instructed the Embassy to inform Savang that regional cooperation which he suggested would make the protection of Laos already enjoyed under the SEATO Protocol more effective. (Telegram 1030 to Vientiane, February 20; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–1359)

213. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, February 17, 1959.

SUBJECT

New Plan for Supporting Lao National Army

Discussion

In view of the importance of the Lao National Army not only for the maintenance of internal security but also as the Royal Lao Government's most effective administrative instrument, we have been concerned for some time at its unsatisfactory state of efficiency and training. Defense has prepared a plan for improving support of the Lao National Army which involves a complete reorganization of the Program Evaluation Office (civilian MAAG) and a marked increase in the number of American active duty personnel in Laos.

Briefly, the plan envisages increasing the total authorized American strength of PEO from 56 to 66 of whom 28 would be active military personnel. It also calls for the assignment of a total of 96 American military personnel in twelve mobile training teams for a period of six months. These teams would operate ostensibly as a ramification of French military mission and would include some French members.

The French military and diplomatic representatives in Vientiane approved of the plan but the reaction of French officials in Paris was clearly negative. This negative position was based on a French view that participation of U.S. instructors in the training of the Lao Army would not be compatible with Article 6 of the 1954 Geneva Accord on Laos or with the former Lao Prime Minister's declaration of May 31, 1958, undertaking continued observance of Geneva restrictions in Laos until a political settlement might be reached in Viet-Nam. The French position also reflected a French intention to "maintain wholly all their relationships with Laos."

We have discussed this problem with the French Embassy here and with Mr. Daridan, Director General of Political and Economic Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, stressing our desire to find a solution to the problem acceptable to France. We have also underlined the urgency of improving the training of the Lao National Army. We hope

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/2–1759. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and concurred in by Kocher and Parsons. An earlier memorandum with an identical subject title, but without a recommendation, was sent to and noted by Dulles on January 19. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/1–1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

that the Lao declaration of February 11[2] will provide a basis for obtaining the necessary French acquiescence in the execution of the plan. However, we have informed Defense that it would be prudent to prepare an alternate plan to be used should it prove impossible to obtain French cooperation.

Pending a final determination of the French attitude we have suspended action on the twelve mobile training teams. We have proceeded, however, with the strengthening of the PEO, the temporary assignment of a team to survey MAP equipment on hand, and the temporary assignment of a small number of Seabees to assist in road and airport repair.

With your approval we propose to authorize the assignment of fifteen enlisted men to supervise Filipino technicians.

Recommendation

That you approve the assignment of fifteen U.S. enlisted men to supervise Filipino technicians already assigned to Laos.[3]

[2] An advance translation of the text of this statement is in telegram 1370 from Vientiane, February 10. In the statement, the Royal Lao Government stated that the 1954 Geneva Agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos had been fulfilled as had the responsibilities for Laos undertaken by the French High Command at Geneva. The government refused to accept the interpretation that the Geneva Agreements were applicable to Laos as long as the reunification of Vietnam had not taken place; nor would it accept the idea that it was the ICC's role to mediate differences between the Royal Government and an unspecified opposition political party, the NLHX. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–1059; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] On another copy of this memorandum, a marginal note indicates Herter "approved providing no uniforms. February 17, 1959." (Department of State, SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, Laos Jan.–Aug. 1959)

214. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, February 24, 1959—6 p.m.

1480. CINCPAC for POLAD.

1. Under released authority Deptels 1029 and 1039,[2] called on Prime Minister morning February 24 to suggest RLG carry out four-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–2459. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Repeated to Paris and CINCPAC.

[2] In these telegrams, February 20 and 23, the Department suggested that while it was not opposed to the Embassy's idea of a conference in Vientiane among the ANL, the French Military Mission, and the PEO on Lao military problems and needs, it

Continued

step plan outlined Embtel 1266[3] by sending note to French and US Ambassadors prior to February 27 meeting of French Defense Committee informing each of them RLG desires to open confidential conversations with the Governments of France and of US and to reassess Lao defense posture and study its strengthening principally by improved training.

2. Phoui then informed me in strictest confidence that cabinet meeting February 21 presided by Crown Prince had reached firm decision re French Military Mission. After prolonged discussion Cabinet had decided that henceforth there was no longer reason for this mission in Laos. RLG would like obtain French agreement that FMM be dissolved but that in view friendly relations between two countries French would maintain military and civilian advisors in position where advisors are required. Cabinet had instructed Foreign Minister Khamphan Panya get in touch with Ambassdor Gassouin to arrive at new formula of aid. However Phoui was still hesitating since he wondering whether presentation RLG decision at this time might not under-cut French support useful and perhaps even temporarily essential to enable RLG to carry through under February 11 declaration.

3. I stated US would of course respect sovereign decisions Laos but in no way wishes be responsible or even possibly appear to be responsible for pushing French out of country. I pointed out again to Phoui that French could if they wished be very helpful in military training and at Seno as well as in medical and cultural fields. I told Phoui my personal reaction was that RLG's approach should at least be gradual so that Laos might not endanger assets of French assistance and friendship. I suggested that perhaps he might wish first send suggested note to Gassouin and me prior 27th meeting in order to leave no doubt in French Ambassador's mind about intention RLG to consult US as well as France re improving army training, and not time this appointment to talk with French Ambassador until middle next week so that he might at opening that conversation ascertain what proposals French prepared to make re their increased military and other aid before telling him anything of Lao negative decision. I urged that even then all care should be taken not to alienate French and decrease French interest and sympathy to extent greater than required to meet in long-run sovereign wishes of Laos and sovereign judgment as to its needs.

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preferred to continue bilateral consultations with the French in Washington and Paris begun by Robertson and Daridan. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/2–1959; both included in the mirofiche supplement)

[3] Document 208.

4. In response Phoui stated he sure French would not react by withdrawing all its military but would rather seek hang on. Phoui added if they did in fact withdraw, however, it probably would be best solution.

5. According Phoui Military Committee meeting February 25 under Crown Prince to discuss inter alia status of Seno which not broached at previous Cabinet meeting.

6. In closing conversation Phoui assured me that note along lines suggested would be sent French Ambassador afternoon February 25.

7. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] report on Cabinet meeting February 21. Single subject discussed was delineation of interest countries area of responsibility in aiding Laos. Decisions were unanimous but limited to general principles along following lines: US should assume total responsibility for military; France, for cultural matters; and US and UK should arrive at understanding on police.

Comments: While from practical viewpoint assumption full responsibility by US to train ANL could simplify problem rapid effective training of ANL and lead quickly to establishment open MAAG our DOD desires, I am greatly concerned by this Lao decision, unexpected at this time. Unless decision kept really confidential (difficult if not impossible) and action taken under decision taken only in carefully modulated and timed stages, I fear following:

(a) Rapid development recent events (February 11 and 17[4] statements; elimination FMM; arrival already contemplated US military) might be interpreted by friend and foe as manifestation US pressure on Laos;

(b) French likely consider US has acted in bad faith—particularly after Daridan talks in Washington;

(c) Laos would be subjected to heavy barrage Communist propaganda of new magnitude;

(d) Decision might well provoke GOF to react sharply withdraw at least all its military, thereby requiring a more rapid US build-up, which in turn would increase reactions a, b, [c, d].

Recommendation (A): Therefore urgently request authorization to indicate to Phoui dangers to Laos and difficulties to US engendered by implementing this decision at this time, and repeat today's advice to

[4] On February 17, the official Lao *Presse Bulletin* clarified Lao defense policy in light of the declaration of February 11 by announcing that the government had no intention of allowing foreign troops to enter or be stationed in Laos, nor did it plan to increase the small number already in Laos. The government stated that Laos had no need for new bases and promised that it would never allow its territory to be used for aggression, and had no need at the present time to join a military alliance. (Telegram 1424 from Vientiane, February 18; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/2–1859; included in the microfiche supplement)

him rather to proceed along lines suggested paragraph 3, and to retain FMM at least until he knows plan crash training period completed some 9–12 months hence.

Comment: B: Decision is purely Lao. As Department aware we here have never missed any of our numerous opportunities to make clear to RLG that we hold French presence in Seno important and welcome the contribution FMM can make in ANL training if properly beefed up and willing to let US supplement where necessary. We have repeatedly seized opportunities to let French Ambassador and D'Arrivere know that we have continued steadfastly in this line.

Recommendation (B): I therefore recommend that I be authorized as soon as I receive note requesting US enter conversations with RLG to reassess Lao defense picture and study its strengthening principally by improved training, to go immediately to French Ambassador and reiterate our position as stressed by Robertson to Daridan and repeated by me in a session with Gassouin especially arranged for purpose last Monday February 16. I would then tell him that while I welcome the opportunity to help do something effective to expedite improvement ANL training, I wanted to do so only in closest cooperation with him and General D'Arrivere.[5]

Smith

[5] The Department concurred in both these recommendations in telegram 1044 to Vientiane, February 24. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–2459)
General D'Arrivère was the head of the French Military Mission in Laos.

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215. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, March 5, 1959—3:47 p.m.

1080. 1. You should take occasion reiterate Phoui our support his government and our confidence in him as experienced, sophisticated Lao statesman well-qualified maintain broadest base for non-Communist government. You should assure him we appreciate difficulties his position but make it clear we becoming disturbed that almost two

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/3–559. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran, cleared by Kocher and Parsons, and approved by Robertson. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

months after grant extraordinary powers political infighting taking precedence over united effort non-Communist elements.[2]

2. You should take line with Phoui as well as ANL, CDNI, LHL that Laos cannot afford choice among them but needs coordinated efforts all elements in struggle against vigorous and determined Communist apparatus. In this respect Department feels pacification LHL elements while required by expediency and gratitude past services cannot be carried to point of jeopardizing national interest. In long run individuals whose main motivation "nostalgia for power" have no claim for U.S. support and must inevitably make greater accommodation political reality CDNI–ANL strength.

3. (FYI. We are concerned by reports via GVN that Phoui feels hemmed in by U.S. pressure in favor ANL–CDNI and against LHL and by intelligence reports indicating Phoui has attempted drive wedge between CDNI and ANL and between certain elements ANL. GVN reports may represent indirect attempt by Phoui resist what he considers U.S. pressure on himself and divert it against other elements. This raises question whether our efforts influence RLG becoming too detailed and we becoming saddled with specific responsibilities better assumed by Lao. Would like your comments but paragraph four should be read with foregoing in mind. End FYI.)

4. Embassy should express to CDNI our continued backing by continued tangible support but should emphasize it essential CDNI (which includes elements ANL too) and better elements LHL arrive at meeting of minds with each other with readiness to compromise both sides; you should encourage ANL minimize political maneuvering by devoting itself to active training program and social action function; you should encourage both CDNI and ANL proceed with appointment constitutional commission as proposed by Phoui including representatives all parties but balanced by Crown appointees including King's Council, CDNI and even ANL.[3]

5. Expenditure small sum suggested by Phoui would appear justified if it would assure no further problem LHL and their employment some useful capacity.[4] Department skeptical wisdom placing LHL members listed Embtel 1442 in positions authority provincial level for

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[2] Smith reported in telegram 1560 from Vientiane, March 12, that he made these points to Phoui on March 10. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/3–1259; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] The Embassy in Vientiane reported in telegram 1559, March 12, that an Embassy officer made these points to Secretary of State Inpeng, an influential member of the CDNI, on March 10. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/3–1259; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Apparent reference to a suggestion in telegram 1442 from Vientiane, February 19, that the Phoui government appoint the 12 most influential LHL members as administrators of rural aid in their respective provinces. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

execution village aid program. Past performance and obstructionist tendencies many of those listed inspire no great confidence. Assignments this sort should be filled by best available candidates among LHL–CDNI membership. Better disposition disgruntled LHL elements might be secondary diplomatic assignments or inspectorates or advisory commission memberships it being understood no such assignments should include opportunities for graft or obstruction.

[*1 paragraph (less than 1 line of source text) not declassified*]

Herter

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216. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, March 25, 1959—8 p.m.

1637. CINCPAC for POLAD. Reference: Embtel 1601.[2] Ministerial meeting under Crown Prince held March 24 on Phoui's insistence and as he had previously promised Phoui saw me after meeting. He told me council had decided:

a. Not to accept French offer of 80 instructors;
b. Keep FMM but insist that role its members be limited to that of experts and technical advisors;
c. Seno be transferred to RLG.

He said he would prepare letter to French Ambassador containing these points.[3]

I said that Gassouin's reply to Foreign Ministry note[4] made proposals on Seno that were unacceptable. According to Phoui Gassouin

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751S.5/5–2559. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Paris, Saigon, and CINCPAC. Received at 12:40 p.m.

[2] In telegram 1601, March 19, the Embassy reported that French General D'Arrivère told Heintges that he was going to Paris to fight for additional training personnel for the mission and assured Heintges that French and American instructors could work together in Laos. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/3–1959)

[3] Phoui showed the Embassy a draft of the Lao letter in response to a March 10 offer by the French Government to provide 80 instructors and a new status for the Seno base. Smith reported in telegram 1657 from Vientiane, March 28, that the language was so polite as to be useless. Telegram 1657 also contains a translation of the Lao draft. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/3–2859)

[4] The Royal Lao Government gave the French Government a note on February 26 requesting information on the training equipment it was prepared to offer Laos. (Telegram 1495 from Vientiane, February 26 and despatch 110 from Vientiane, March 6; *ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/2–2659 and 751J.5–MSP/3–659, respectively) The French reply is de-

Continued

proposed that base be managed by French military, fly two flags and that one Lao battalion be staged there, commanded by French officers and non-coms and trained by French instructors, but RLG would finance all costs of battalion. Furthermore to satisfy ANL needs French would turn over to ANL part of matériel on base. RLG perfectly prepared use base jointly, Phoui emphasized, but did not want maintain status quo because it considered that present status Seno represented "remainder of Geneva Agreement" and RLG determined do away altogether with any possible applicability of agreement in any respect.

I pointed out at some length that in my opinion it dangerous get French in uproar at this time, that their participation over next crucial six to nine months essential, that once ANL had been put back on its feet at end this period, RLG would probably be in better position take more longsighted view of situation if they so wished but that now it must face shortrun problems squarely because precipitation showdown with French now might well seriously upset all plans to strengthen ANL including ours. I expressed hope that in his letter Phoui might so word RLG's position as to save French sensibilities and more specifically that Phoui might at least suggest FMM could perhaps still be so reorganized as to permit some of its personnel or their replacements to participate in training. In course discussion Phoui finally confidentially admitted that basic decision of RLG was to get rid of French military altogether, and that as he had told Minister Blakeney it was only my representations over the past several months that had prevented RLG from doing it already. However, he said he appreciated need to avoid hurting French feelings, especially at this time, and offered to show me his draft of letter before sending it to Gassouin, for my suggestions toward making its contents as palatable as possible to French.

I told Phoui I would appreciate such an opportunity to help prevent any avoidable misunderstanding or disagreement between RLG and France. I said that I did not question sovereign right of Laos to decide exact nature of its relations with France but if implementation of such a decision seemed likely to interfere with effectiveness or to limit extent of our aid to Laos under MSP I believed it my duty to invite this fact to his attention. I believed that from what I had already said to him consistently from date of my initial call on him as Foreign Minister he must know that I was personally firmly convinced, as was my government, that Laos can best be helped in foreseeable future by full cooperation with French. I told him that Ambassador Gassouin and General D'Arrivere, in my opinion had cooperated magnificently

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scribed in telegram 1074 to Vientiane, March 4. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/3–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

with me and Chief PEO in our attempts to bring about joint French-American assistance of type ANL needed and wanted and that I was still convinced that, for at least the six to nine months required for the basic training urgently needed by the ANL, it was essential for Laos and US to retain French cooperation and to have at least token French participation. French acceptance of US participation in military training would to my mind go far toward establishing in rest of free world legality of presence our military here. I wanted Prime Minister to have no doubt that action taken by RLG at this time which resulted in closing door on French participation with us in a joint ANL–US–French training program would create great difficulties in international field and might even prevent our being able to help them with training teams as we had hoped and prepared to do. Phoui said he understood and would keep matter in mind.

Re US participation Phoui said that he would send letter to me requesting US training assistance soon after he had sent letter to French which would be done before this weekend.

Comment: I am concerned by possible French reaction to flat rejection their offer of 80 instructors after they had been led to believe by informal initial Lao reaction problem was one of finances (Embtel 1578).[5] I therefore think it all the more important that we respond to Khamphan Panya's note along lines suggested in Embtel 1556[6] emphasizing formally our desire to cooperate with the French and importance we place on keeping French fully in training picture at least through nine months basic training period. If I can be authorized deliver note before Friday council meeting believe it may help soften Lao position and strengthen the chance of retaining French participation.

Smith

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[5] Dated March 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–1559; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] In telegram 1556, March 11, Smith recommended acknowledging the February 26 Lao Government note to the United States (similar to the note to the French of the same date) by stating that the U.S. Government was prepared to send 105 officers and noncommissioned officers to Laos for 6 to 9 months as part of 12 mixed U.S.-French training teams. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–1159; included in the microfiche supplement) A translation of the Lao note was transmitted in telegram 1494 from Vientiane, February 26. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/2–2659)

217. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, March 25, 1959—5 p.m.

1641. Department pass information CINCPAC for POLAD. Reference: Deptel 1030.[2] I called on Crown Prince March 24 to deliver message authorized reference telegram substance of which already given February to Prime and Foreign Ministers in absence Crown Prince.

Following presentation text of message including reiteration guarantees previously made (Embtel 616 October 4, 1958)[3] I expressed opinion that these assurances provided in event actual need essence of guarantee he sought. Crown Prince asked whether written statement would follow. I replied that message was intended as oral reply to his earlier oral inquiry.

Crown Prince said that he appreciated guarantee as given since it contained valuable indications for RLG, that he had no criticism of US policy and felt US was great friend of Laos. In this connection he wished reaffirm there would be no change in present Lao attitude to US. However, while he accepted message without recrimination he felt obliged frankly express his dissatisfaction with US unwillingness recognize Lao boundaries as presently delineated. This he said weakened Laos and left RLG in position not knowing whether it had full US support. He was of opinion Laos at present time did not have necessary or adequate guarantee with which to carry on its new bold and clear foreign policy and asked whether we realized chasm now existing between Laos and ChiComs and DRV. The RLG he stated had decided some time ago to abandon any form of neutrality in order mark its hostility to Communist world. "For a little country with no resources or strength this decision was an important act." He was seriously concerned over the security of Laos and felt it his duty address himself to US for more clear cut assurances of support.

I repeated my opinion that while in each instance it would be up to the RLG to decide how best to meet threats from ChiComs or DRV the Department's message clearly reiterated once again US intention to stand firmly behind its commitments in SEATO. As member SEATO if inviolability or independence of Laos threatened US would consult immediately on measures to be taken for common defense. Personally I felt a too precise or public guarantee might defeat joint Lao-US purposes and might invite attack for purpose engaging US

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/3–2259. Secret; Priority. Received at 2:02 p.m., March 26.

[2] See Document 212.

[3] Document 198.

forces or distracting world attention from other events such as Berlin issue. I pointed out that Crown Prince should realize US must also consider problems on world wide basis and make certain any guarantee would be helpful rather than harmful to both Laos and US in long run and in overall struggle against Communist aggression.

I then informed Crown Prince of April visit Assistant Secretary Robertson[4] at which time if he wished he would have opportunity discussing guarantee and other matters of mutual interest. Such discussions with one of principal US policy formulators would, I felt, give Crown Prince additional sense reassurance. Crown Prince indicated he would be greatly pleased to meet with Assistant Secretary for whom had highest regard. I said I would plan talk to Assistant Secretary myself on matter at Manila. I then stressed Department's interest with respect to Crown Prince's idea of having Laos take initiative and lead in trying promote regional cooperation of a type which would make protection Laos already enjoys under SEATO even more effective and would stimulate mutually beneficial economic and social development. Crown Prince made no comment this statement.

Crown Prince then admitted that in fact Laos was not in agreement with any of its neighbors on border question but that it had no intention reviving such disputes at this time. SVN, Thailand and Burma were friends of Laos. Cambodia on other hand was trying to attract RLG into joining its neutral position but Lao people had matured through experience and had adopted definite stand this respect.

Once more I expressed to Crown Prince my personal conviction that should an attack from the north take place, RLG could be sure of US support appropriate to the particular threat through UN, bilaterally, or through SEATO but that precise guarantee of borders of type he had seemed desire presented certain problems that I hoped he would recognize. I would be glad to present to Department any suggestion Crown Prince had that might more precisely define the assurances he felt were necessary.

Comment: Despite reiterated assurances given during this audience and on several previous occasions Crown Prince obviously desirous elicit something in way of additional direct assurances from US. His present thinking on kind of promises he feels essential though still not clearly defined now appears to have reverted to earlier idea of "moral support" rather than specific border guarantee. Question as to what he really seeks was, however, somewhat clarified by Phoui's statement to me March 24 (Embtel 1637)[5] in which Prime Minister indicated Crown Prince not satisfied with repeated oral statements but

[4] Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Parsons rather than Assistant Secretary Robertson visited Laos in late April.

[5] *Supra.*

rather anxious obtain *written* guarantee of US moral and material support. If written assurance of some nature could appropriately be provided on understanding not to be made public I believe it would be extremely helpful in easing CP's and RLG's concern. If Department determines that written guarantee can be furnished, my opinion not necessary await further elucidation from Crown Prince and personal delivery of such statement to him by Assistant Secretary Robertson on occasion his visit Laos next month would make it most effective. If written assurance deemed unwise am confident Robertson's restatement and personal explanation significance our assurances should be most helpful in giving CP satisfaction.

In response CP stated that he would like US to assume clearly "position of a sure and loyal friend but not that of a protector" and not obliged to take action every time a few North Vietnamese or ChiComs penetrated Lao territory. RLG could always seek appropriate US "protection" as occasion and need arose and US could then decide what measures appropriate. "For me", he emphasized, "major and crucial problem is that of Communism both external and internal. It is matter of life or death to Laos. Communist China alleges that Laos plans to attack it as pretext to dominate the country and has taken this stand merely because Laos has sought aid from West. Nevertheless Laos not asking now for precise guarantee of its borders."

CP then said that he would refer the whole matter to RLG and that by time Assistant Secretary Robertson arrived he and government would have the details worked out as to exactly what type and measure of additional assurance if any they wished to secure. Nevertheless he felt US should appreciate that the steps in this connection being taken by Laos were in interests of its friends as well as its own. "What Laos would like is for the US to help it create a more definite climate of anti-Communism in the whole area; this is a common task and a question of principle in fight against Communism". He pointed out that RLG has been actively endeavoring cut ties between NLHX elements and Communists and has consistently refused all Soviet bloc requests to establish diplomatic mission in Laos. Laos he admitted knew it could not get out of its difficulties without US help and in this connection it was vital for him and for RLG to give US a clear picture of what the Lao think and what they hoped to accomplish. "Whether US will help with guarantees or intervention in a specific case is a decision that US alone can make".

I replied that I felt certain US would pay most sympathetic attention to Lao views and that we depended greatly on his and RLG's interpretations of wishes and needs of Lao people. US intentions made quite plain through its military and economic assistance to Laos. US view was that ANL must be improved on urgent basis so that it could counter internal subversion and appropriately help discourage or repel

any plan attack country. I said it was necessary for ANL not only to secure training but also to develop efficient communications and intelligence networks. We had repeatedly told RLG we were prepared provide military instruction most needed to supplement French efforts but RLG's wishes must first be officially and formally though perhaps confidentially expressed. I suggested CP might wish to encourage positive action in this connection which I understand RLG now considering.

After expressing his agreement on urgency this matter and his full knowledge of it he stated it was RLG's aim remove all idea of defeat from minds ANL and Lao people. This would require modifying military organization and was not diplomatic or political but a psychological and moral problem. RLG did not wish to hurt its "friends" yet to realize the above objective would find it difficult avoid doing so. In other words CP clearly implied he wanted see French completely out of ANL training.

I told CP I understood US prepared help in develoment ANL morale by providing 106 specially selected and trained experts to assist in military training who would work at regional headquarters and in field with ANL for six months on closest possible basis. These men were now ready to come to Laos provided formal request received from RLG followed by agreement after consultations among ANL, Heintges and General D'Arrivere.

CP quite properly made no comment possibility formal request for US assistance as council meeting was already scheduled for same afternoon to discuss or decide Lao position on subject.

In closing audience CP asked that I convey his best wishes for Secretary State's full and prompt recovery.

Smith

218. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, March 31, 1959—3:35 p.m.

1176. Vientiane's 1660, 1657, 1643, 1637, 1636, 1601, 1578, 1571, 1556, 1494.[2]

1. Vientiane authorized reply Khamphan Panya's note (Embtel 1494) along following lines:

A. Acknowledge receipt note and refer to conversation reported Embtel 1494 in which Khamphan Panya stated request intended cover training as well as material and equipment needs.

B. State U.S. remains convinced necessity improve training ANL and desires assist this purpose. However realize this must be accomplished in manner minimize international complications.

C. State U.S. hopes be able improve ANL training as originally proposed in closest cooperation with French Military Mission. We consider such continued cooperation most important. FMM with its organization in being in Laos and its familiarity ANL represents valuable asset for Laos. Hope RLG can reach agreement with French whereby FMM will provide at least four specially qualified French officers or non-commissioned officers for each of twelve training teams.

D. Whatver solution is found between RLG and French U.S. wishes most emphatically maintain along with ANL closest coordination and cooperation with French military personnel engaged in this and other military training activities Laos. As Foreign Minister stated he had made same approach to French Ambassador and informed him of note to us a copy of this reply is being provided French Ambassador.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–2859. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons and Corcoran; cleared by Jenkins, Kocher, WE, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense; and approved by Robertson. Also sent priority to Paris and repeated to Saigon and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1660, March 28, the Embassy sent the informal thoughts of the Country Team on recasting the form of U.S. military training contributions to Laos. (*Ibid.*) Regarding telegram 1657, March 28, see footnote 3, Document 216. In telegram 1643, March 26, Smith reported that Ambassador Gassouin stated that the French Foreign Ministry was not taking military assistance to Laos seriously. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–2659) Telegram 1637 is printed as Document 216. In telegram 1636, March 25, the Embassy reported that the French Military Attaché in Laos, Colonel Delafon, was soon to leave for Paris and wished a clear indication of the U.S. position on Seno and military training. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–2559) Regarding telegrams 1601 and 1578, March 19 and 15, see footnotes 2 and 5, Document 216. In telegram 1571, the Embassy reported preliminary tripartite discussions on the training issue. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/3–1359) Regarding telegrams 1556 and 1494, March 11 and February 26, see footnote 6, Document 216. Telegrams 1660 and 1643 are included in the microfiche supplement.

2. In delivering note you should refer to portion on minimizing international complications and point out it essential avoid so far as possible strengthening Chicom-DRV-Soviet arguments for reactivation ICC or affording DRV and Chicoms ready pretext for border violations. Support of U.K. and Canada as well as minimum concern on part India is necessary if current bloc efforts reactivate ICC are to be parried without causing complications these friendly countries. Similarly French too, thus far, insist on continuing validity Geneva accords. Therefore U.S.-RLG desire implement more effective training scheme in which U.S. participates must be realized in manner and at time best calculated not jeopardize allied support through appearance taking precipitate or provocative action. U.S. remains prepared assist in training if RLG formally requests but must reserve decision on timing and method in light international developments and outcome RLG-French discussions. In this connection you may state Department fully supports your statements to Phoui (Embtel 1637) re need retain French cooperation and at least token participation training. Finally (with reference Embtel 1657) you may suggest to Phoui substitution paragraph 2 draft RLG letter to French along lines you propose[3] despite text our note paragraph 1 above which records our desire for RLG-French agreement.

3. As soon as note delivered[4] Department will inform French Embassy here of substance thereof and of our understanding D'Arrivere's view which we consider has merit. Will further state that if French cannot soon reach agreement with RLG, U.S. will regretfully feel obliged, given urgent ANL training need and necessity justify continued budgetary support, consider other means accomplish purpose set forth paragraph 1 B above.

4. Embassy Paris should promptly communicate substance paragraphs 1 and 3 above to Daridan.[5] We hope cover some ground with Couve here.

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[3] Apparent reference to paragraph 2 (G) of the Lao draft letter to the French as translated in telegram 1657 from Vientiane. It originally read: "Therefore RLG proposes to GOF a further meeting between interested French and Lao authorities in order to come to an agreement." The Embassy suggested changing this language to the following:

"In my letter of February 26 I mentioned that Defense Committee had requested me to make similar approach to American Ambassador for additional aid his government prepared to furnish ANL. I have not yet received answer from American Ambassador but in view of fact French proposals while generous do not seem susceptible of meeting ANL present and urgent needs I would like to propose that interested American, French, and Lao authorities meet at earliest opportunity to discuss entire problem of training ANL."

[4] Done on April 1. (Telegram 1676 from Vientiane, April 1; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/4–159)

[5] Done according to telegram 3623 from Paris, April 1. Daridan expressed the view that the United States and France should avoid an open breach with the Geneva Agreements on Laos or a flagrant move which would provide India, the People's

Continued

5. (FYI. Concur line Vientiane Embassy officer took with Colonel Delafon re Seno. We have made clear in past importance we attached to continued French presence Seno. However see no point now in becoming involved jurisdictional issue which appears to have become largely prestige question between France and RLG. End FYI)

Herter

Republic of China, or the Soviet Union additional ammunition for their argument in favor of reactivating the ICC in Laos. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/4–159)

219. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, April 10, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Franco-American Cooperation in Training Lao National Army

PARTICIPANTS

His Excellency Herve Alphand, French Ambassador
Mr. Charles Lucet, French Minister
The Honorable Walter S. Robertson, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs
Mr. Eric Kocher, Director, Southeast Asian Affairs
WE—Mr. Edgar J. Beigel
SEA—Mr. Thomas J. Corcoran, Officer-in-Charge, Laos Affairs

Mr. Alphand referred to his earlier conversation with Mr. Murphy[2] on the subject of ANL training and to the suggestion of General d'Arrivere concerning Franco-American cooperation and said that he had received word that the French Government was ready to consider General d'Arrivere's suggestion. He then reviewed the contents of the attached note and said he felt that execution of such a plan would not be in violation of the Geneva Accords. He well realized that the US had not signed the Geneva Accords but felt that since the French had signed them this consideration was important. He said that if the US agreed in principle the details of such a plan might be discussed between the French Foreign Office and the American Embassy in Paris.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/4–1059. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared by Kocher.

[2] Memorandum of conversation, April 8. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/4–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

Mr. Robertson said that there appeared to have been a misunderstanding about what we had proposed from the very beginning on improving the training of the ANL. General Heintges, when he visited Laos near the end of last year, had been concerned that the ANL was not getting proper training and that its condition was deteriorating. Under the Geneva Accords the French had been entitled to maintain a military mission of 1500 men and base garrisons of 3500 men. In actual fact, we understood that the total French military strength in Laos had declined to about 300 of whom only about 100 appeared to be concerned with training. General Heintges and the Defense Department were concerned about our ability to continue to get funds to support the Lao army if it appeared that through inadequate training it would be unable to accomplish its purpose. General Heintges had discussed the matter with General d'Arrivere, with whom he was personally acquainted, and with Ambassador Gassouin. He had worked out a plan for training under French supervision. It was never our intention to take the place of the French in training the Lao army. The French representatives on the ground in Laos had been in general agreement with this plan. Mr. Robertson had also discussed it with Mr. Daridan during his recent visit to Washington.

Mr. Alphand expressed the opinion that French acceptance of US participation in ANL training and French willingness to pay the cost of additional French training personnel represented progress. Mr. Robertson said that we were much encouraged by this news and that we would refer the French proposal to the Department of Defense for its comments after which we would again discuss it with the French Embassy.

Attachment

NOTE[3]

After receiving the reply of the Lao Government to its proposals on the question of training the royal army, the French Government decided to consider a new formula capable of assuring useful Franco-American cooperation in Laos. This formula could be inspired by the principles described below:

1) With a view to respecting the arrangements of the Geneva Accords, it is important that France retain charge of training Lao combat units.

2) The United States would for its part, in accord with the French Military Mission, attend to the functioning of logistic services such as quartermaster, engineering, communications, matériel.

[3] Secret. The source text indicates this is an unofficial translation.

3) Instruction would take place at the Seno base where would be assembled on the one hand the French technical personnel there stationed and on the other hand 80 French instructors charged with assuring the instruction and putting back into condition of the 14 Lao infantry battalions. The Lao authorities would be invited to maintain permanently at Seno two battalions under instruction and to furnish the necessary service personnel.

4) The upkeep of the 80 French instructors charged with training the Lao forces would be at the expense of the French government.

The adoption of this solution presupposes that the Seno base which belongs territorially under Lao sovereignty will remain under French command.

The French Government hopes that the details of this formula can be discussed as soon as possible in Paris between the United States Embassy and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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220. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, April 21, 1959.

SUBJECT

Franco-American Cooperation in ANL Training

Discussion

The French Ambassador called on you on April 10 to present the French Government's views on ANL training and to describe a new formula to assure useful Franco-American cooperation in Laos (Deptel 1228,[2] Tab A). This formula included French acceptance of the principle of U.S. participation in ANL training and French willingness to pay the cost of 80 additional French instructors. Thus it represented progress from the earlier French position of a French monopoly of training activities. You informed Mr. Alphand that we would submit the new proposal for Defense Department consideration. We have learned informally from Defense (Mr. Irwin through Colonel Bingham) that the

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 403.2 Lao Army Training, Dec. 1958–Apr. 1959. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared with WE and the Department of Defense in substance. None of the tabs was attached.

[2] Telegram 1228, April 10, summarized the conversation reported *supra*.

Defense Department[3] will find the French proposal unacceptable substantially for the reasons set forth in Vientiane's 1767[4] (Tab B) and Baguio's 16[5] (Tab C).

These reasons may be summarized as follows:

1) The new French proposal would almost certainly be unacceptable to the RLG which does not really want French training to continue;

2) It is not responsive to the urgent political and security needs which the Heintges plan was designed to meet through immediate, simultaneous country-wide battalion training;

3) Removal of two battalions from the field to a training center would critically reduce the already weak internal security arrangements and would probably result in RLG requests for an increase in the ANL force level and support;

4) Continued French monopoly of combat training would exclude the U.S. from a vital sector necessary to sound logistic programming;

5) It would involve a large new expense item, i.e., transportation of two battalions and equipment by air about every three months to and from the training center as well as the redeployment of troops to cover vacated areas.

FYI: A later report from Vientiane (Embtel 1780,[6] Tab D) indicates a possibility that the French might agree to the formation of field training teams assigned to regional headquartrs and to the attachment to these teams of U.S. logistics instructors in civilian clothes. If this should be so (and we are not at all sure that Delafon, the French Army Attaché in Vientiane, who gave our Embassy this report, speaks with authority in this case) then 2) above would no longer be applicable. End FYI.

Recommendation:[7]

That you inform Mr. Joxe, or instruct Paris to inform the Quai d'Orsay that:

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[3] The formal Department of Defense response is in a letter from Deputy Secretary of Defense Quarles to Herter, May 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Telegram 1767, April 15, contained the views of the Embassy, Military Attaché, and PEO. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/4–1559; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Telegram 16, April 16, contained the views of Ambassador Smith and Admiral Felt, both of whom were in Baguio, Philippines, for the annual Far East Chiefs of Mission meeting. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/4–1659; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Dated April 18. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/4–1859)

[7] There is no indication on the source text if Robertson approved these recommendations, but he made the recommended points to Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, Louis Joxe, and French Ambassador Alphand on April 21, according to telegram 3986 to Paris, April 22. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/4–2259; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. We see certain disadvantages in the French proposal for the reasons set forth in numbered paragraphs 1) through 5) under *Discussion* above. However, we feel these disadvantages can be eliminated within the framework of the French proposal in a manner which will satisfy the RLG, France and the U.S. and at the same time meet our indispensable requirement of prompt rehabilitation of the Lao National Army.

2. We are pleased to learn that the British are prepared, provided discreet Franco-American plan can be worked out, to take the position that admission of U.S. instructors would not be a violation of the letter or the spirit of the Geneva Accords by arguing from Article 10 of the Laos Ceasefire Agreement and the last sentence of the Lao Unilateral Declaration at Geneva (IC/47 Rev.1, 21 July 1954)[8] (Tab E). They would take the line that these references indicate it was presumed at Geneva that other than French instructors might be admitted to Laos in the future if required for effective territorial defense.

3. We would prefer that the Chief of the French Military Mission maintain overall command of the training of Lao combat units in order to make the fullest use of existing French assets and to minimize provocation of the Communist bloc. We also consider it important, however, to meet the wishes of the Lao and our own requirement. FYI: One suggestion, made by Mr. Parsons, is that U.S. training personnel in civilian clothes be stationed at area headquarters, ostensibly only for logistic training but with the understanding that they shall take part, under French overall command, in troop training. This is a possible compromise solution that can be proposed to the French unless further explorations with the British re 2) above should indicate that they are prepared to support U.S. uniformed personnel. End FYI.

4. We are prepared to undertake detailed discussions of the foregoing in Paris or in Washington as the French Government prefers. We believe that such discussions should be broadened to include representatives of the RLG as soon as practicable. FYI: If possible, Mr. Parsons on his return to the States might stop in at Paris to participate in these talks if the timing should be suitable and if his schedule can be arranged accordingly. End FYI.

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[8] The Geneva agreement on cessation of hostilities in Laos and the Lao unilateral declaration are printed in *Foreign Relations*,1952–1954, vol. XVI, pp. 1540–1544.

221. Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (McElroy)[1]

JCSM–160–59 *Washington, May 4, 1959.*

SUBJECT

French Proposal for Supporting and Improving Armée Nationale Laos (C)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the French proposals[2] appended to the memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), dated 17 April 1959,[3] for supporting and improving the Armée Nationale Laos, and consider these proposals unacceptable for the reasons indicated below:

[Here follow five reasons, a–e, why the French proposals were unacceptable to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They are substantially the same as the five reasons listed in Kocher's memorandum *supra.*]

f. The French proposals still call for U.S. personnel to function as civilian "specialists" which would prolong this thinly disguised subterfuge with an inevitable loss of dignity and face for the United States.

2. It is manifestly in the best interest of the United States to have French cooperation in this important program. The current position of the French Government, which accepts participation by the United States in the over-all training effort in Laos, does represent an important step forward. However, it is apparent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that acceptance of the French proposals would in fact subordinate the U.S. training effort to that of the French and as a practical matter would not achieve the desired results.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that training of the Lao Army should be decentralized throughout the countryside in accordance with the concept previously recommended by the Heintges plan, and that U.S. participation in both combat and logistical training is essential. Furthermore, the urgency of the situation, together with the courageous actions of the Royal Lao Government in regard to the Geneva Accords and their current desire for U.S. assistance in matériel, instructors, training personnel and technicians, dictate that immediate action be taken by the United States, preferably within the framework of French cooperation, but with a determination to act unilaterally if circumstances require.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 353 Laos. Secret.

[2] Reference is to the French note attached to Document 219.

[3] Memorandum from Irwin to the JCS, April 17. (Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 353 Laos)

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted that the Department of State on 22 April 1959 communicated to the French Government U.S. comments on the French proposal for Franco-American cooperation for improvement of the Armée Nationale Laos.[4] In view of paragraph 2 above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur with French over-all command of any joint training plan developed.

[4] The meeting took place on April 21; see footnote 7, *supra*.

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222. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Kocher) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson)[1]

Washington, May 11, 1959.

SUBJECT

Franco-American Cooperation in ANL Training

Discussion:

It appears from Paris telegram 4079[2] (Tab A) that the French are attempting to obtain our acceptance and support of a position that is far apart from our position on the sort of Franco-American cooperation necessary for prompt and effective improvement of the condition of the Lao National Army. The present French position rejects the concept of Franco-American joint teams and the concept of simultaneous training of all battalions of the Lao Army in the field. They are attempting to insist on continued exclusive French training of combat units of the Lao Army and to require that such training be concentrated at the Seno base. It also seems clear that they have an understanding of the wishes of the Lao Government that differs greatly from ours. In view of this fact, whatever course of action we decide on, it has now become desirable that the Lao communicate their views to the French in an unequivocal manner. Vientiane's 1892[3] (Tab B) indi-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–1159. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran, approved by Ambassador Smith, and sent thorugh Parsons. None of the tabs was attached. The telegrams contained in Tabs A, B, and C (see footnotes 2–4 below) are included in the microfiche supplement.

[2] Telegram 4079, May 5, contains a translation of the May 2 French note on Lao training. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–559)

[3] Telegram 1892, May 7, reported that Phoumi expressed his strong preference for U.S. trainers in instructor and advisory roles while the French would fill predominantly service positions. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/5–759)

cates that the Lao may already have done this and, as pointed out in Paris' 4118[4] (Tab C), this action may have a salutary effect on the French attitude. The details of the Lao position described in Vientiane's 1892 do not coincide exactly with the details of the Defense position[5] (Tab D) but in principle they support that position and indicate the unacceptability to the RLG of the French position. Defense has officially recommended a minimum U.S. position which Ambassador Smith believes could, if politely but firmly stated in opening talks, provide a sound basis for obtaining French cooperation in Paris talks.

It would appear that we have a choice of five possible courses of action, as follows:

1) Acceptance of the French position as set forth in Paris telegram 4079.

I believe we cannot pursue this course of action since past events have clearly demonstrated that a French-dominated training program will neither meet our indispensable requirement for rapid improvement of the condition of the Lao National Army nor be acceptable to the Royal Lao Government.

2) Relinquish the entire training program to the French on the assumption that they could improve their performance by building up their training mission in quality and quantity.

On the basis of past experience, it seems unlikely that the French could or would, so improve their efforts. It would also be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for us to continue financing a training effort over which we would have no control. It is clear that the French wish to continue a primary role in Laos, probably wth the least effort required. In any event the Royal Lao Government has repeatedly made it clear to us that it would not accept such a solution.

3) Consultation in Paris with the French, with a view to negotiating a relaxation of the French position and a substantial accommodation to our views.

In view of the much more restrictive position now suggested by the French (Paris telegram 4079, Tab A), it appears that it will now be difficult to obtain such a relaxation of the French position. However, it perhaps can be done if we concentrate on persuading the French to accept the basic framework of the Heintges plan against the clear alternative of our being obliged to proceed without further delay with courses of action 4 and/or 5 described below. Even if such negotiations are not successful, they should at least help assure the U.K.

[4] In telegram 4118, May 8, the Embassy warned that the French and de Gaulle considered the Lao training issue a matter of national prestige. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/5–859)

[5] Apparent reference to the memorandum *supra*.

Government, whose support would be most helpful, that we have honestly exhausted all possibilities of reaching an agreement with the French.

4) Proceed independently of the French and in collaboration with the Lao to carry out a training effort along the lines of the original Heintges plan.

This would be the most satisfactory solution from the point of view of accomplishing improvement of the army, and from the point of view of U.S.-Laos relations. However, decisions would have to be made concerning probable U.K., Canadian, Indian and Communist bloc reactions to such a decision. U.K. support for our efforts to improve the ANL has so far been contingent on our working out arrangements with the French. It is problematic if the U.K. will support the introduction of U.S. training personnel into Laos without French concurrence. The Canadians have taken a legalistic approach to the problem and would not be likely to go along with a unilateral U.S. solution. The Indians would clearly object. The Chinese Communists, on the basis of their extremely strong propaganda reaction to the Lao February 11 and 17 Declarations,[6] would react strongly propaganda-wise and perhaps through the application of military pressure against Laos. Adoption of this course of action would entail sounding out the U.K. and perhaps the Canadians to arrange for their support of, or acquiescence in, such a move. It would also require the preparation of diplomatic and propaganda moves to undercut bloc reaction.

5) An entirely new approach to the problem envisaging complete exclusion of the French from ANL training and large-scale training of Lao officers and non-coms at American military schools in the U.S. and Hawaii, or possibly the Philippines.

Diplomatic and propaganda exploitation of this approach could stress that the RLG had decided to dispense with all foreign military advisors.

6) Increase in the size of the Civilian Supervisory Group by the subtle introduction of additional US personnel on a semi-clandestine basis. This would be a perpetuation of the present unsatisfactory situation and would be unsatisfactory in the long run. It would be impracticable in any event since the "cover" of the PEO has evaporated. PEO's expansion on a semi-clandestine basis, assuming, as seems likely, this would become known, would probably evoke as violent a reaction from the French, the Canadians and the Communist bloc as the open introduction of U.S. Military personnel.

[6] See footnote 2, Document 213, and footnote 4, Document 214.

Recommendation:[7]

1. That, if the French have not already been so informed (Vientiane's 1892), the U.S. cease discouraging the Lao from disclosing their true feelings regarding training preference. Once this is done, however, it should be realized the U.S. has incurred an obligation to the Lao to undertake training of the ANL by one means or another.

2. That we inform the French the position stated in Millet's note represents a retrogression from the earlier French position on the basis of which we agreed in principle to discussions. We would wish, however, to start discussions with the Government of France on the basis of their memorandum of April 10 and ours of April 22. If this is acceptable to French a date for negotiation will be set. (Tab E)

3. That we informally indicate to the U.K. that we are doing our best to reach agreement with the French on training the ANL in a manner responsive to Lao desires and needs but that it is possible we will not be able to reach such an agreement. On the basis of the U.K. reaction we may then have a clearer idea as to the advisability of choosing alternatives 4 or 5 above, in the event 3 is unsuccessful.

[7] There is no indication on the source text if the recommendations were approved, but telegram 4370 to Paris (sent also to Vientiane as 1355), May 13, made the points recommended here. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

223. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 15, 1959—7 p.m.

1945. Department pass niact CINCPAC for POLAD. Department pass Department of Defense. Reference: Embtel 1932, [3 *document numbers not declassified*], ARMA CX 56 and CX 58.[2] Prime Minister at 4 p.m. May 15 requested me to obtain US Government's advice with regard to RLG efforts to force integration or dispersal two ex-Pathet

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.55/5–1559. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution.

[2] Telegram 1932 from Vientiane, May 14, contained preliminary information on the controversy over integration of the two Pathet Lao battalions into the ANL. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/5–1459) In a memorandum to Parsons, May 16, Jenkins summarized the situation apparently based on some or all of the referenced reports. (*Ibid.*, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 351.11 Pathet Lao, Jan–June 1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

Lao battalions.[3] Since lapse of extended ultimatum 0700 May 15 situation unclear. Regional commanders were authorized shortly thereafter to use all necessary means presumably including force to disarm and gain control of troops unwilling integrate voluntarily or demobilize. High-ranking ANL officer has informally requested [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] stock of tear gas and gas masks as recourse to avoid use of firearms in dispersing battalions. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Prime Minister has letter from Souphanouvong stating latter ordered nonintegration of two battalions.

Prime Minister informed me evening May 14 of general situation of ultimatum to expire early morning May 15 and said that army intended cut-off supplies to force issue.

Having learned of army orders to commanders use all means necessary to force dispersal or compliance, I intend seeing Prime Minister or Foreign Minister soonest to indicate that pending receipt US Government response to request for advice, I feel it necessary to express concern at grave consequences which might result from eruption open conflict and that I hope all measures likely to set off open conflict will be avoided so long as any other means may be available, such as psychological war, withholding supplies, et cetera. Have advised all US agencies pending receipt advice not to aid or abet any aggressive efforts ANL likely to trigger open conflict.

Advice requested most urgently.[4]

Holt

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[3] Since November 1957, two Pathet Lao battalions were garrisoned with their dependents at Xieng Khouang on the Plain of Jars, where they remained to be integrated into the ANL. Negotiations with the government dragged on inconclusively over the issues of rank and numbers of commissions and back pay. On May 14, the Royal Lao Government issued an ultimatum giving the Pathet Lao 24 hours to accept integration or resign from military service.

[4] In telegram 1365 to Vientiane, May 15, the Department concurred with Holt's proposed approach and instructed him to stress to the Royal Lao Government that violence against the two battalions would be "disadvantageous," unless it was in response to Pathet Lao-initiated violence. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–1559; included in the microfiche supplement)

224. Memorandum for the Record by the Assistant to the Director, Far East Region, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Bingham)[1]

I–14053/9 *Washington, May 18, 1959.*

SUBJECT

ANL Training

A meeting attended by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Knight, Ambassador Smith, Admiral O'Donnell and the undersigned was held on May 15th at State Department, during which the question of French-U.S. negotiations on the training of the Lao Army was discussed.

During the course of this meeting it was decided that in order to demonstrate our good will to the French, as well as to our friends having primary interest in the area—the British and Canadians, we should accept the French proposal for military-diplomatic talks in Paris on ANL training commencing May 25th. It was further decided that Ambassador Smith should head the U.S. delegation to be composed of, in addition to the Ambassador, Brig. Gen. Heintges, CHPEO; Mr. Corcoran, Laos desk officer at State; and the undersigned. (CINCPAC has been requested by cable to order General Heintges to Paris by 22 May.)

Ambassador Smith suggested that these talks be initiated within the framework of the Robertson–Joxe conversation of 22 April[2] but with the understanding that the term "French command" as used by Mr. Robertson be interpreted as "French nominal control."

This suggestion was accepted by Mr. Knight with the understanding that the 4 May letter from Defense to State[3] would constitute the basis for the U.S. position.

Ambassador Smith stated that in order to sell our proposals to the French he planned to offer them the following assurances which Mr. Knight stated must be carefully checked out in advance:

a. We do not want to replace the French in Laos.
b. We do not want to diminish French influence there.
c. We do not want to assume for ourselves any new or special responsibilities in or for Laos.
d. We will withdraw our training teams from Laos at the end of a six to nine-month period.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 353 Laos. Secret.

[2] The meeting took place on April 21; see footnote 7, Document 220.

[3] Not printed. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

Mr. Knight also desired that the basic premise of the Heintges plan, namely the concept of combined U.S.-French tactical training teams, be carefully checked out in the Pentagon.

Sidney V. Bingham, Jr.
Colonel, USA

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225. National Intelligence Estimate[1]

NIE 68–59 *Washington, May 19, 1959.*

THE OUTLOOK FOR LAOS

The Problem

To estimate the prospects for political stability in Laos over the next year or so with particular reference to the Communist threat.

Conclusions

1. The Communist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ), although it has recently suffered some setbacks, is still the most effectively organized political party in Laos and a serious threat to continued non-Communist rule. The lack of unity between the non-Communist political groups, the Lao Hom Lao (LHL) and the Committee for Defense of the National Interest (CDNI), continues to hamper the development of an effective anti-Communist program. (Paras. 11, 12)

2. Nevertheless, important leaders of both non-Communist groups are beginning to appreciate the fact that continued disunity plays into Communist hands, and we believe that, with constant prodding, they will probably maintain their precarious modus vivendi for the period of this estimate. However, if the CDNI/LHL modus vivendi is not maintained and the CDNI and its army supporters become convinced that there is no other means of reducing the conflict and

[1] Source: Department of State, INR–NIE Files. Secret. This estimate was prepared by the CIA, INR, and the intelligence organizations of the Army, Navy, Air Force and The Joint Staff. It was submitted to the USIB on May 19 and all members concurred with the exception of the representatives of the AEC, the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations, and the FBI, all of whom abstained on the grounds that it was outside their jurisdiction.

shifting governmental attention to the Communist problem, they may be tempted to seize power. Their decision would depend in large part on the prospect of US support. (Paras. 15, 17)

3. Government and army efforts to undercut Communist strength have had moderate success in the past half-year even in the absence of fully effective cooperation among non-Communist elements. It is probable that a broad government program, if supported and vigorously pushed by a united non-Communist front, would further reduce the strength and influence of the NLHZ and provide at least a better than even chance of continued non-Communist rule. (Paras. 16, 20)

4. The CDNI has developed considerable political power during the past six months. Its strength depends mainly upon the support of influential army officers and upon US backing. Although the CDNI organizational structure is still at an early stage of development, it is working to build a nationwide political organization. If the CDNI/army relationship is maintained, we believe that the CDNI will play an increasingly important part in the government. (Paras. 13, 14, 17)

5. Key Lao Army leaders are becoming more active in political affairs and the Lao Army will have a major role to play in any government program to reduce Communist strength. However, the army's limited military capabilities are gradually diminishing, largely because of inadequate training. If the Lao Communists were to initiate a general program of terrorism or guerrilla warfare, the army would probably be unable to maintain internal security except in populated areas and along the country's few main transportation routes. (Paras. 22, 23)

6. We believe that the Hanoi-directed NLHZ will seek to avoid overt actions which would invite suppression by the Lao Government, at least for the period of this estimate. Any decision for the NLHZ to revert to armed insurrection and forego its legal political status would probably be made by Hanoi and Peiping. Such a decision would probably be made only as a last-resort effort to preserve some assets should the government press an effective and large-scale program to suppress communism or as part of a broader Bloc plan to increase tensions in the area. (Paras. 19, 21)

7. We believe that given continued strong US support, Laos will not change its basically pro-US policy to any significant extent during the period of this estimate. However, the Laotian political and military leaders will expect the US to give continuing and concrete manifestations of its support, especially during the periods of heightened tension which will probably result from their anti-Communist effort at home and from their forthright pro-US foreign policy. The Bloc will probably increase its effort to reconvene the International Control Commission (ICC) in Laos, in hopes of protecting the NLHZ, frustrating any US effort to improve the capabilities of the Lao Army, and exacerbating differences among the Western nations. (Paras. 24, 26)

8. French influence and prestige in Laos are diminishing. Major causes of this include Lao dissatisfaction with the training and support rendered by the French military mission and Laos' increasingly close ties with, and heavy dependence upon, the US. The French resent their loss of influence in South Vietnam and are suspicious that the US is attempting to replace them completely in the rest of Indochina. De Gaulle and his government will almost certainly seek to limit growing US influence in the effort to increase the position and prestige of France. He will strive to retain the French administrative jurisdiction over the base at Seno. While the Lao Government will press hard for the prompt elimination of such French responsibilities, we believe that during the period of this estimate the Lao Government—if prompted by the US—would probably go along with a more gradual resolution of this problem. (Para. 25)

[Here follows the "Discussion" section, which is included in the microfiche supplement.]

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226. Editorial Note

On May 21, at the 407th meeting of the National Security Council, Allen Dulles gave his briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." He reported on developments in Laos as follows:

"Mr. Dulles commented on the serious difficulties which had occurred in Laos as a result of the revolt of two battalions of troops which had formerly been part of the Pathet-Lao Army. The two battalions had not yet been integrated into the Royal Lao Army. One of the two battalions had surrendered but most of the members of the other battalion had fled into the bush. This incident, coupled with others, had greatly disturbed the Chinese Communists and the Viet Minh. There was a strong move sponsored by the communist powers to reconvene the International Control Commission (ICC) in order to study these developments which were described as alarming and a threat to the peace. The situation had been further complicated by the flight into Laos of some 500 hardened Chinese Nationalist forces who had been driven out of Burma. Meanwhile, negotiations between the French and the Laotians were going on with respect to the establishment of a U.S. training mission for the Royal Laotian Army. It was quite plain that the Laotians did not wish any French forces to remain to train the Laotian Army, a point of view which was rather embarrassing to the U.S. It was of course of great importance that the U.S.

military training mission be successfully constituted." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason, May 21; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

At the next meeting of the Council, the 408th on May 28, Allen Dulles reported again on developments in Laos:

"In Laos the Pathet-Lao brigade which had refused to be integrated with the Royal Laotian Army was still in the bush and was still resisting pressure to join the Royal Army. This situation was giving much concern, rather more political than military in character, because the Communists were exploiting it at the same time as an excuse to demand the reconvening of the International Control Commission. If the Commission were to be reconvened, this would be a step backward in the development of U.S. relationships with Laos. At present we could not be sure that the British would resist the Communist demand." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason, May 28; *ibid.*)

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227. Telegram From the Embasy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, June 3, 1959—3 p.m.

2086. Department pass DOD, ICA. Reference: PEO telegram 929–59 to CINCPAC information OASD/ISA pass to State.[2] For purpose of evaluating and making recommendations ANL requests for extraordinary military aid (reference telegram), country team developed estimate of present and early future situation in Laos with regard to internal security. Basic conclusion was that glaring exposure of ANL weaknesses, present movement of ANL and PL forces, some loss of public confidence in ANL and RLG, excitement of enemy interest, all precipitated by effort to integrate PL battalion, have heightened and made more immediate threat to internal security of Laos.

It is believed that enemy will endeavor to exploit ANL weakness during next few months, up to approximately one year which will be required to train ANL forces. Greatest danger will come it is believed

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[1] Source; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/6–359. Secret. Repeated to Paris, London, Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Not found. Other PEO telegrams give indications of the magnitude of the Lao Government requests: 18 aircraft and 8 helicopters, an increase of 4,200 personnel formed into 42 Volunteer battalions, and 4,000 Auto-Defense personnel. Both troop augmentations were to be equipped to existing standards. (PEO 923–59 and 940–59, May 31 and June 3; *ibid.*, 751J.5/5–3159; both included in the microfiche supplement)

from Communist efforts to establish de facto parallel government in many local areas throughout Laos, which, in classic pattern, can control elections or take over rest of country by force at some future date.

Estimate in detail follows:

A. Capabilities and possible courses of action of dissident elements.

1. While current crisis was triggered by successful escape of ex-PL BN from Plaine des Jarres, timing for integration ceremony which provoked incident was set by RLG. Past assessments have always granted PL capability bringing certain rural areas of Laos under their influence without applying force. By threat of force some areas are already under their nominal control. (A strip of Laos along North Vietnamese frontier of varying depth is heavily infiltrated, as are other sections of Laos. ANL request for extraordinary aid claims 40 local districts, Khongs, are without adequate readily available local army or police protection.)

2. Dissident elements are capable spreading network of strong points over whole of Laos with aim of establishing "rural power system" whose prototype in other countries has been prelude to Communist coup d'etat. Such action likely to be in form of series of country-wide uprisings with objective of immobilizing sizeable units of ANL and police. PL BN acquiring additional territorial holdings will be secondary to keeping entire country in state of uncertainty and turmoil.

3. If the unintegrated PL BN is ordered to remain on Lao soil, the dissident elements will have force supported by Viet Minh posing permanent threat to Lao security. If mass effort is launched against them by ANL, BN can cross frontier to Viet Minh sanctuary. This PL BN and others now reported in being, if supported by Viet Minh, are capable of maintaining frontier brush fires beyond present ability of ANL to quell.

4. NHLX can retain role of "martyrs", protesting government repression and killing, but not retaliating with violence. Hope of control of country through legal elections would be their objective.

B. RLG capabilities and possible courses of action.

1. RLG is capable, through ANL and police, of taking limited repressive measures against NLHX, PL, and other dissident elements. Provided these determined non-resistance offers best chance long range success, these measures could be successful.

2. RLG capable of immediate disengagement from escaped PL BN, concentrating on intensified training effort to become an effective security force, on propaganda campaign against NLHX, and on stepped-up rural aid program.

3. The RLG, for considerations of "face", can continue operations against PL BN with purpose of destroying or capturing it. Because of weather, terrain, and appallingly low effectiveness of ANL, chance of succes is almost nil.

Preoccupation with PL may cause further deterioration of internal security and seriously hamper US-French efforts revitalize ANL.

C. *Comment:*

1. Before 11 May, ANL was respected and in some areas feared by general population. PL integration plan backfired. Damage has been disclosure to friend and foe of glaring weaknesses of ANL. RLG has suffered serious setback but local and world wide focus of attention on situation may result in eventual benefit.

2. While unconfirmed reports of Communist intentions to initiate local disturbances in July have been discounted, it is difficult at this time to gauge NLHX intentions. Their future actions will doubtless be influenced by state of disorganization of the ANL and their estimate of time it will take RLG to correct their weakness. Threat or actual execution by RLG of policy of general repression of NLHX or introduction US training personnel may provide a "legal" basis for NLHX to openly challenge RLG and initiate brush fire actions.

Foregoing partial answer to London's 6218 to Department.[3] More details on ANL and weakness to follow.[4]

D. Department's attention invited to country team concurrence PEO recommendations in reference telegram to CINCPAC regarding ANL requests for emergency aid, noting dissent by ARMA with respect increasing volunteer and auto-defense units.

Holt

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[3] In telegram 6218, May 28, the Embassy in London requested information on ANL military inadequacies for discussions with British officials. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–2859)

[4] Telegram 135 from Vientiane to London, repeated to the Department of State as 2101, June 5, was prepared by the Army Attaché who concluded that the ANL was so understrength, badly-armed, poorly-led, and subject to chronic communications and supply problems that it could not fulfill its internal security functions without foreign military advisers. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/6–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

228. Letter From Secretary of State Herter to Secretary-General Hammarskjöld[1]

Washington, June 9, 1959.

DEAR DAG: I have your letter of May 29 describing Mr. Nehru's concern about the situation in Laos and in Southeast Asia in general.[2] The Communist propaganda campaign against the little Kingdom of Laos has recently become greatly intensified and this campaign may be intended to lay the groundwork for some sort of Communist Bloc diversion in Southeast Asia. Mr. Nehru's concern is quite understandable when viewed against this background.

The United States has been giving military and economic aid to Laos for a number of years. It is clear that this small country could not hope to survive without such aid, which is not of sufficient scope to present any threat to Laos' much more powerful neighbors. We sincerely hope there will be a reduction of tension between Laos and North Viet-Nam, and the calm and dignified attitude of the Royal Lao Government in the face of the storm of propaganda to which it is being subjected should contribute to such a reduction of tension. On the other hand, a too ready response to Communist intimidation efforts would serve only to weaken the position of Laos without enabling it to defend itself against the very real threat to its internal security. The Lao Government's actions to date in handling the problem of the former Pathet Lao battalions show that it is endeavoring to maintain its internal security in the least provocative manner possible.

We have had ample opportunity to learn that the Communists readily create provocations to justify actions which they plan to take in the international field. However, while fully appreciating this fact, we do not intend to take, or encourage others to take, any measures that could legitimately be construed as provocation of the Communist Bloc.

The Royal Lao Government has taken the position that it has fully discharged all the obligations assumed by it or for it at the Geneva Conference of 1954. The Royal Government reached an agreement with the Pathet Lao in November 1957 providing among other things that 1,500 former Pathet Lao troops be integrated ino the National Army in appropriate ranks and positions. The Pathet Lao which had violated the accords of 1954 by continuing armed resistance for almost

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2959. Secret. There is no indication on the source text who drafted this letter.

[2] In his letter, Secertary-General Hammarskjöld stated that Nehru was greatly concerned about reports of importation of U.S. telecommunications equipment, trucks, and military personnel in civilian clothes into Laos. Nehru asked Hammarskjöld to do his best in Washington to promote a constructive approach to peace between the factions in Laos. (*Ibid.;* included in the microfiche supplement)

three years after the Conference finally complied with its original undertaking to be integrated into the national community only after extorting additional concessions concerning coalition government. Then later it insisted on higher ranks and positions for its military personnel. The Royal Government granted even this concession and then at the last minute on May 11, 1959, the Pathet Lao provoked the current crisis by fabricating a charge of discrimination against one of its leaders and Prince Souphannouvong used this as a pretext for ordering a boycott of the ceremony arranged to commission the former Pathet Lao officers.

Meanwhile the International Commission for Control and Supervision of the Armistice in Laos had adjourned sine die and departed from Laos. Since the Royal Government has made it clear that it does not desire the return of that body, I share your feeling that the International Commission cannot be of any use in Laos at the present time.

I know the Lao value very highly their membership in the United Nations. I am sure their warm feelings towards the United Nations are due, in considerable measure, to the personal interest which you have shown in their problems. I think we should continue to follow this situation closely and I look forward to the opportunity of talking with you about it.

With warm personal regards,

Most sincerely,

Christian A. Herter[3]

[3] Printed from a copy that bears this stamped signature.

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229. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson) to the Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy)[1]

Washington, June 11, 1959.

SUBJECT

Principles for Arrangements with Laos for the Improvement of Lao National Army Training

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/6-1159. Secret. Drafted by Corcoran and cleared with SEA, L, EUR/WE, W/MSC, and the Department of Defense.

Discussion

Since October 1958 we have been informally discussing with French representatives in Vientiane ways and means of improving the state of training of the Lao National Army. The situation is complicated by the fact that, although the U.S. pays the entire cost of maintaining the Lao National Army, the situation arising out of the Geneva Accords in 1954 had prevented us from establishing a MAAG in Laos. A French Military Mission remains responsible for training. We have studied ways and means of improving Lao National Army training through U.S. participation in the training effort in a manner that will be satisfactory to the Royal Lao Government and at the same time avoid unfavorable international repercussions. Such repercussions would stem from British, Canadian and Indian reactions to any U.S. training effort that these nations would consider a violation of the Geneva Accords of 1954.

Officers of the Department and of the Defense Department held informal conversations in Paris the last week in May with representatives of the French Foreign Ministry and the French Defense Ministry on this problem. As a result of these conversations a draft of general principles was prepared taking into account the special situation created by the Geneva Accords in Laos (Tab A).[2] These principles could serve as a basis for an eventual arrangement with the Defense officials of Laos on the training of its army. They are now awaiting the approval of high level French Government officials. This arrangement would be reached in the general framework of the Pentalateral Agreement of December 23, 1950 (Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina—Tab C)[3] which provides, inter alia, for furnishing "equipment, material and services" to Laos.

They represent substantially a plan proposed by the American Defense representatives in Laos last October, modified to take into account what the French believe to be their special responsibilities in Laos under the Geneva Accords of 1954. Financing of the additional U.S. personnel under the plan is estimated at about $835,000; the Department of Defense has included this amount in the planned FY 1960 MAP training program for which appropriations are now being sought before the Congress and for which program approval request will be made to the Department in due course. Once these principles have been approved by both the French and American Governments as a basis for discussion with the Lao Government an approach to the

[2] Attached but not printed. Text of these principles is in telegram 4408 from Paris, May 29. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/5–2959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] 3 UST (pt. 2) 2758.

Lao Government can be prepared. The special situation arising out of the Geneva Accords of 1954 would require that any arrangement with the Royal Lao Government be kept confidential.

Recommendation

That you: 1) approve the principles set forth in Tab A as a basis for a possible arrangement with the Lao Defense officials, as described above; and 2) authorize the communication to the French Government of notification of such Departmental approval, by signing the attached telegram (Tab B).[4]

[4] Reference is to telegram 4884 to Paris, June 13, in which the Department of State instructed the Embassy to inform the French Government that the United States approved the general principles on Lao training (see footnote 2 above). (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/6–959)

230. Editorial Note

On June 30, Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone accepted for his government French and U.S. notes of June 26 in which the two governments formally offered Laos a joint training program for the Lao National Army. The French would provide on detached service from the French Military Mission 12 teams of French officers or non-commissioned officers for individual unit tactical training. The U.S. contribution was to be 12 teams of "civilian technicians" to assist the French Military Mission teams by providing individual technical training in communications, motor maintenance, demolition, field engineers and expedients, field sanitation and first aid, company administration and maintenance, and operation and employment of U.S. weapons. A translation of the formal Lao note accepting the U.S.-French offer was transmitted in telegram 2240 from Vientiane, June 30. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/6–3059) A translation of the French note of June 26 is in telegram 2227 from Vientiane, June 27. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/6–2759) A copy of the U.S. note of June 26 was transmitted in despatch 3 from Vientiane, July 2. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/7–259)

231. Editorial Note

On July 13 and 16, Assistant Secretary of State Parsons met with representatives of the French, British, and Lao Embassies in Washington to coordinate a joint approach for gaining India's acceptance of the French-U.S. joint training plan for the Lao National Army. The four governments agreed to assure the Indians that the plan was necessary, non-provocative, and designed solely to enable the Lao National Army to fulfill its internal security function. The French would assure the Indian Government that the plan involved no real change in their responsibilities under the Geneva Accords of 1954. The U.S. representative in New Delhi was to inform the Indians that the U.S. role was technical and in no way foreshadowed Laos joining the SEATO organization. If asked, the British representatives in New Delhi would inform the Indians that the plan did not violate the Geneva Accords of 1954. In addition, the representatives of the four nations agreed upon procedures for announcing the new training plan. (Circular telegrams 47 and 54, July 13 and 16; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/7–1359 and 751J.5/7–1659, respectively)

On July 22, the U.S. Chargé in New Delhi advised the Indian Foreign Office of the French-U.S. plan. (Telegram 235 from New Delhi, July 22; *ibid.*, 751J.5/7–2259) On July 23, a joint French-Lao declaration announcing the new training plan was made at the French Foreign Ministry's daily press conference. There was no initial press interest in the announcement. (Telegram 356 from Paris, July 24; *ibid.*, 751J.5/7–2459)

All the telegrams described, except telegram 356 from Paris, are included in the microfiche supplement.

III. THE POLITICAL CRISIS AND THE DECEMBER 1959 COUP, JULY-DECEMBER 1959

232. Editorial Note

At the 415th meeting of the National Security Council, July 30, Allen Dulles gave his usual briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles and Dillon discussed Laos as follows:

"Mr. Dulles reported that in Laos local communist forces aided by volunteers from across the border had taken control of part of the province of Sam Neua but not the town of Sam Neua. This activity might be due to a number of factors, including the desire of the communists to prevent U.S. training of Laotian forces. It might also be a probing action coordinated at the highest levels of the communist plotting organization. The Laotians have recently improved their government and the communists may be beginning an effort to overthrow that government. The situation requires close attention.

"Secretary Dillon said that from the U.S. standpoint Laos had achieved outstanding success in the last year in strengthening its political stability. The communist Pathet-Lao had agreed to re-unify with the idea that the communists would be able to penetrate the government. However, the government had excluded the communists, who had accordingly lost influence while the government had steadily gained in strength. The U.S. troop training program had strengthened the government still more. The communists appear to be chagrined and unwilling to admit that they have failed." (Memorandum of discussion by Gleason, July 30; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

233. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

Washington, July 31, 1959—10:27 p.m.

842. 1. One probable motive current Communist guerrilla activities Laos is creation situation provoke return ICC to Laos and GOI likely respond such situation by putting pressure on RLG to accept return.[2] RLG on basis public position and past dissatisfaction ICC almost certain bitterly resent and resist any such Indian move. US position remains that wishes RLG as most interested party this subject should be respected. Also on basis past performance ICC we see no advantage resumption ICC activities Laos. Broader objective Communists may be cause dissension among Laos' friends abroad.

2. After standing firm against reconvening ICC for more than a year, RLG, if it accepted reconvening now would be giving in to use of force. We would then have to be prepared face consequences of such successful utilization of force by Communists.

3. While superficially current Communist actions may appear reaction to new ANL training program it should be recalled these actions planned and even executed before training program announced. Essentially current resort to violence is extension of rebellious activity which commenced when PL battalion Sam Neua took to bush in May. Furthermore Communist effort clearly not limited to reconvening ICC but is rather reversion to force in face of progress towards internal stability and security being made by RLG most notably in last few months and corresponding failure of Communist "soft" tactics in disrupting this process. How far Communists intend go in use force of course not yet clear.

4. Although GOI attitude ICC well known and not likely be basically changed by US, UK or RLG approaches believe it worthwhile make effort head off situation in which India on one hand and RLG and Western friends on other publicly at loggerheads on ICC issue. You should discuss with Foreign Office using rationale developed foregoing paragraphs possible representation to GOI by UK. Such

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/7–3159. Secret. Drafted by Marshall Green and Corcoran; cleared by SEA, SOA, and BNA; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Vientiane, Paris, New Delhi, CINCPAC for POLAD, and Geneva for the Secretary.

[2] In telegram 107 from USUN, July 29, the Mission summarized a letter from Prime Minister Nehru to Hammarskjöld, June 30, which Hammarskjöld showed a U.S. official. Nehru stated that the Geneva Accords of 1954 had foreseen the current tensions in Laos and stated that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had a legitimate interest in the Royal Lao Government treatment of former Pathet Lao. Nehru suggested that the ICC should formally meet and attempt to mediate the differences between the two Lao parties. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/7–2959)

representation would outline RLG position as injured party setting forth whatever evidence North Vietnamese responsibility can be adduced while subtly underlining UK, US and French determination publicly support RLG position against reconvention ICC. This approach might persuade Indians not publicly take line which would lead to open split between GOI and RLG on this subject

Dillon

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234. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 4, 1959.

SYNPOSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

The military situation in northern Laos remains grave with Communist partisans retaining initiative. Senior Laos officials continue to emphasize the participation of North Vietnamese troops and the Governors of Phong Saly and Nam Tha claim that Chinese Communist troops are actively patrolling the frontier of Nam Tha. Although evidence is inconclusive, it is probable that North Vietnam is involved in the planning and direction of the attacks and the training of the Pathet Lao units engaged. Hanoi has issued warnings.

Phoui yesterday reviewed the developments for Smith[2] and the UK and French chargés have requested advice on possible diplomatic steps. Smith stressed the need for positive proof of Viet Nam involvement. The UK has mentioned the UN, SEATO, and even the ICC.[3] State is against the ICC and would prefer the UN over SEATO at this time although we agree that prompt diplomatic measures must be taken. One complication lies in the fact that the Laos request for U.S. instructors can form the basis for a claim by the ChiComs that Laos had violated the Geneva accords.

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in telegram 208 from Vientiane, August 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–359; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Reported in telegram 202 from Vientiane, August 2. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–259; included in the microfiche supplement)

[Here follows information unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

235. Telegram From the Secretary of State to the Department of State[1]

Geneva, August 4, 1959—7 p.m.

Secto 461. At Selwyn Lloyd's suggestion I met today with him and with Couve to discuss Laos situation and possible course of action. Following were highlights of discussion:

1. *Military Situation.* I read contents Vientiane 2[2] and 3[3] stressing that a North Vietnam battalion was now reported by the Provincial Governor to have crossed the border into Phong Saly. Lloyd said that the British military attaché still believed there was no proof of the introduction of North Vietnamese forces, but noted that he, Lloyd, had told Gromyko on Sunday that such forces were present and had even given the numbers of the North Vietnamese battalions, naming units believed to be in the area. We all agreed that the situation was confused and most difficult to assess, since we were dependent on second-hand reports from Lao sources. In general, Lloyd seemed during the discussion to incline to the view that this was quite possibly a major incursion that might sweep from Sam Neua and Phong Saly into other provinces, so that much of the country might be lost in a fairly short time. We took slightly less grave view, and French seemed to have little information.

2. *Diplomatic Situation.* It was noted that the RLG was definitely filing a statement of the facts with the SYG at the UN.[4] Lloyd read extracts from the report of the acting British representative (Beeley) of consultations with the US, French, and Canadian representatives in New York. According to this report, it was the consensus of the UN representatives that without a specific resolution Hammarskjold

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–459. Secret. Repeated to London, Paris, Vientiane, New Delhi, Ottawa, and USUN.

[2] Reference is to telegram 208 from Vientiane, repeated to Geneva as telegram 2; see footnote 2, *supra.*

[3] Reference is to telegram 209 from Vientiane, repeated to Geneva as telegram 3, August 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8-359; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] The text was transmitted in telegram 241 from Vientiane, August 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

would not be likely to act in a way that could be construed as partisan, but that the French should ascertain his views in a meeting scheduled (we understood) for the evening of the third. The Canadian representative had apparently suggested that if a favorable SC vote for action by the SYG could not be obtained, Hammarskjold might still act pursuant to individual invitations by the powers concerned; it was generally agreed this was impractical. Lloyd reported that there seemed to be agreement with Beeley's judgment that although any SC initiative would be vetoed there would be the seven votes necessary to refer the matter to the UNGA under a uniting-for-peace resolution. As to the outcome in the UNGA, Beeley thought a two-thirds vote could be obtained provided that good evidence could be produced of North Vietnamese involvement. In this connection, Couve immediately pointed to the danger that a UN resolution would also include a paragraph calling for the return of the ICC. It was agreed that consultation at the UN should continue in order to lay the ground work for any action that should prove desirable

3. Lloyd also reported that the British had told the Indians (A) that there was no point in bringing back the ICC for the present and that an approach to the UN was preferable; (B) that, however, the ICC should be kept readily available to return on short notice as necessary; (C) that there was absolutely no truth in reports of US military activities in Laos, apart from the announced training program.

4. *Possible courses of action apart from the UN or ICC.*

A. *Sending attachés to the affected areas.* This was suggested by Couve, arguing that any first-hand information would be preferable to the present situation. We noted that the attachés might not find much unless there were some ANL action leading, for example, to the capture of prisoners. Lloyd mildly favored the idea, arguing that it would have some deterrent effect and would be a "morale-building exercise" at least; he also noted a danger that the attachés would be accused of involvement themselves. There was also some discussion of logistic difficulties. It was agreed that all three should ask the judgment of Vientiane as to the practicability and usefulness of this step. Embassy Vientiane please comment soonest.

B. *Using the Indians as mediators to Vientiane and Hanoi.* Also suggested by Couve, the mission to be that of (1) asking for the facts; (2) suggesting restraint. We said a diplomatic approach through established representatives seemed better than sending a special man. The British noted that the Soviet (and Hanoi) radios were already strongly denying North Vietnamese involvement, so that the Hanoi response seemed clear. In a lukewarm atmosphere, Couve did not pursue, and the idea was let drop.

5. *Reactivation of the ICC.* Lloyd still seemed inclined to favor this remarking that he would "like to see some Canadians around." We noted that the Canadians had usually been outvoted, and that much would depend on the individual Indian named as chairman. (Address-

ees: Is there any information on latter?) Lloyd again argued that the Indians had learned much in the last two years. In discussion of a legal basis for reactivating the ICC, we noted that the provision in Article 27 (A) of the armistice about respecting frontiers seemed to provide a complete peg if we wanted one, and Lloyd suggested that the ICC might be reactivated for this sole purpose. It was agreed, however, that once recalled the ICC would be hard to restrict and would almost inevitably involve itself in the political situation, NLHX arrests, et cetera. Couve seemed clearly opposed and noted the time element, that it would take weeks to get the ICC in, but that thereafter it would be bound to stay at least several months. In the end discussion focused on the RLG attitude, it being agreed that RLG objections should not be overridden. Lloyd said bluntly that it was clear the RLG would not agree unless the US told them to. We repeated the sad experience of the ICC in the past indicating our continued skepticism, and in the end the issue was left without decision.

Herter

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236. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 5, 1959.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

No changes have occurred in the military situation in northern Laos over the past 24 hours, according to the Laotian military high command. Communist partisan forces remain in control of several government outposts in Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces; bad weather has hampered counteraction by government reinforcements. On 4 August, the Laotian Government charged the military "with maintaining internal peace and order" in Sam Neua and Phong Saly

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

as well as three other Laotian provinces where scattered harassing incidents have occurred.[2]

Bloc propaganda continues to place heavy stress on the urgency of reconvening the ICC in Laos. British Foreign Secretary Lloyd in a talk with Secretary Herter urged that the door not be closed on the return of the three-nation ICC, arguing that the Indian and Canadian members "might be able to play a constructive role."[3]

Meanwhile, the Lao UN representative told Lodge that Laos intends to inform Hammarskjold of North Vietnamese incursions for circulation to all UN members.[4] This representative claims he has three captured North Vietnamese soldiers who are being sent to Vientiane. The UK is hoping that Lloyd's message to Nehru[5] might restrain Nehru for the time being on reconvening the ICC.

[Here follows information unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[2] Reference is to the declaration of a state of emergency in the five Lao provinces bordering the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Xieng Khouang, Khammouane, and Savannakhet were the other three) issued on August 4. (Telegram 262 from Vientiane, Joint Weeka 32, August 7; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00(W)/8–759

[3] Apparent reference to the discussion reported in Secto 461, *supra*.

[4] See footnote 4, *supra*.

[5] Lloyd sent Nehru a message on August 3 expressing concern about the situation in Laos. Nehru replied on August 4 that India was unsure of how to proceed because of the Royal Lao Government's opposition to reconvening the ICC in Laos. Nehru asked that the United Kingdom and the other 1954 Geneva Conference Cochairman, the Soviet Union, take up the issue. (Secto 475, August 5; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

237. Editorial Note

At the 416th meeting of the National Security Council, August 6, Allen Dulles gave his briefing, "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security," and reported on developments in Laos as follows:

"Turning to the situation in Laos, Mr. Dulles reported that it was difficult to get clear and accurate information. Mr. Dulles displayed a map indicating the exposed position of Laos and the location of forces in and on the border of Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces. He said the communists could infiltrate volunteers across the border without their being clearly recognized as enemies. However, Laos should have enough troops to control the situation unless substantial numbers of North Vietnamese troops come over the border. He doubted that organized communist military formations would invade Laos. He believed

that the fight against Laos had been inspired by the Communist powers, and undoubtedly had been discussed while Ho Chi Minh, the President of North Vietnam, was in Moscow.

"The Western Powers at Geneva had discussed the situation, with the U.K. being disposed to reorganize the International Control Commission (ICC). However, both the U.S. and France were against reactivating the ICC, a step which would bring the communists into the area again. One of the communist purposes in the action against Laos is to ensure that the ICC would be reconstituted in order to block U.S. training operations, which are increasing Laotian ability to defend against aggression. Propaganda from Hanoi has been asserting that U.S. training in Laos is a threat to the security of North Vietnam.

"Secretary Dillon agreed that the main communist objective is to force the reactivation of the ICC in order to halt the U.S. training program in Laos and stir up trouble in the northern provinces. India wants to reconstitute the ICC, but Canada does not believe the ICC should be reconstituted in the absence of Laotian approval. If the fighting in Laos continues three alternatives are open: (1) reconstitute the ICC (2) seize the United Nations of the situation (3) invoke the SEATO treaty. France and the U.S. are agreed that it would be unwise to invoke the SEATO treaty. Accordingly, Laos is being discouraged from taking such a step and is being encouraged to appeal to the United Nations. The principal difficulty in the situation is that of establishing facts, that is, proving that there has been communist infiltration across the border. The Western Military Attachés in Laos have been directed to try to establish the facts and the Laotian Government has been impressed with the importance of marshalling facts to substantiate its appeal to the U.N. The U.N. Secretary General has told India that it would not be useful to reconstitute the ICC unless Laos agrees. Secretary Dillon felt the U.S. would have to await developments in Laos before taking additional steps.

"Mr. Dulles said the use of communist volunteers in Laos raised the question of the use of Free World volunteers and pointed out that Thailand as well as South Vietnam had good soldiers who would make effective volunteers." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, August 6; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

238. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 8, 1959—5:45 p.m.

173. Following is State–Defense general concept of action to meet Lao situation.

1. We believe first requirement is to strengthen morale and capability of Lao National Army. This step has first priority. If we appear reluctant or incapable of strengthening ANL, Lao morale will slump and Communists will be emboldened to press for wider objectives in Laos. Once this process starts, may be difficult if not impossible to arrest without major commitment US or SEATO resources. Clearly enemy probes must be met at outset. To this end an increase in ANL military capability is necessary to meet the situation under active consideration. However these measures should not appear unnecessarily provocative, or cause loss of international understanding and support for our moves. Response must be tailored to diplomatic and political exigencies.

2. A properly adjusted US response at this juncture would not only strengthen Lao fiber and capability but would be aimed toward (a) increasing Communist concern just enough to induce reluctance to give us further provocation and (b) providing backing for diplomatic maneuvers aimed at tranquilization situation while maintaining integrity of Laos. Our diplomatic bargaining position will be stronger if ANL in reasonable control of situation. Conversely it will be difficult to resist pressures for reconvening ICC Laos, with all that that might contribute toward disrupting Laos, if military situation has gotten out of hand.

3. Two immediate diplomatic objectives this juncture are (a) obtain hard evidence DRV and/or CPR direction, control, participation and/or assistance Communist attackers in Laos and (b) try convince Indians at least drop advocacy of reconvening ICC. Accomplishment these necessary to insure successful diplomatic efforts mentioned 2(b) above.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–859. Secret. Drafted by Usher; cleared by SEA, FE, IO, BNA, SOA, and UNP; and approved by Parsons. Also sent to London, Paris, New Delhi, USUN, CINCPAC, Bangkok, Saigon, and Phnom Penh.

4. Separate message has authorized CINCPAC to take steps aimed to improve ANL air lift.[2]

5. Further logistic and related military support measures under consideration to be applied as required by developing situation. These should include on spot urgent consideration Franco-American cooperation in training activities tailored to fit needs of moment.

6. We will continue close consultation with UK, France, Canada, and other friendly countries.

Herter

[2] Telegram 963469 from the Department of Defense to CINCPAC, August 8, authorized a special airlift that allowed the Chief of PEO to assist the ANL in aerial supply. (Summarized in joint State–Defense telegram 175 to Vientiane, August 8; *ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

239. Telegram from the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 9, 1959—3 p.m.

270. Re Embassy telegram 269.[2] Reference: Subject: Verbatim text assessment by military attachés France, Britain and U.S.

In conformance with instructions received from their government, the military attachés of the United States, Great Britain, and France have studied together the various aspects of the situation in Laos created by the armed insurrection in the province of Sam Neua.

A copy of the reports made by each of the three officers will be sent to you without delay,[3] but it is possible to say now that their conclusions are identical as follows:

1. Most of the information furnished by the responsible Lao authorities has been manifestly exaggerated.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–959. Secret; Niact. Repeated priority to Paris, London, New Delhi, Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 269, August 9, the Embassy reported that the U.S. Army Attaché in Vientiane was "very unhappy" over the wording in point 1 of the joint assessment reported in this telegram. The language was modified to its present form at the Attaché's strong insistence. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] The U.S. Attaché sent his own assessment and that of the French Attaché in telegram 271 from Vientiane, August 10. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1059) The assessment of the U.K. Attaché is in telegram 298 from Vientiane, August 12. (*Ibid.*, 751J00./8–1259) Both telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

2. Even though the Lao authorities have claimed the active participation of regular units of the PAVN with guerrilla actions this has not been proven.

3. The Lao civil and military authorities now actually limit themselves to speaking of small groups or of individual VM.

4. The number of armed rebels in the province of Sam Neua probably does not exceed a few hundred, but it is possible that substantial reinforcements may come to back up the insurrection; however, they have not been able to furnish any concrete proof.

5. Nothing permits the exclusion a priority [*priori?*] subsequent intervention by the PAVN, but neither does anything serve to confirm this hypothesis.

6. The majority of the Thai, Meo and Kha ethnic minorities are hostile to the Royal Government which explains the active or passive aid which the rebels secure or may secure from the countryside.

7. From the information received it seems that a certain disturbing unrest exists in other provinces of the Kingdom and that some local form of insurrection may develop.

8. The ANL troops at the disposal of the Royal Government in the province of Sam Neua are now numerically very superior, and should easily be able to overcome the insurrection except in the case of substantial reinforcements or intervention from without which is still to be feared.

9. If the disturbances spread, which is very possible, it is to be feared that the ANL will not be capable of countering them effectively.

Smith

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240. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 10, 1959—8:06 p.m.

187. Vientiane's 272 and 277, August 9.[2]

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–959. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher; cleared with SEA, FE, and UNP; and approved by Parsons. Repeated priority to London, Moscow, New Delhi, Bangkok, Paris, Ottawa, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 272, Smith reported that British Ambassador Lincoln had raised with the Lao Government the idea of a U.N. factfinder/mediator. In a subsequent conversation with Phoui, Smith reported that Phoui was receptive to the idea of a factfinder, but not a mediator. (*Ibid.*) The British had raised the idea of a factfinder/mediator with U.S. officials in London and Washington on August 6 and 7. (Telegram 684 from London, August 6; memorandum of conversation, August 7; *ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/8–659 and 751J.00/8–759)

Continued

1. Department appreciates validity RLG analysis British proposal but hopes RLG and UK can develop mutually agreeable procedure whereby (a) Lao would retain initiative in making direct approach to SYG for appointment observer or investigator and (b) British as Co-chairman could support such approach with USSR and SYG as well as GOI.

2. Perhaps this might be achieved if RLG were to reply to British along following lines: RLG welcomes UK interest and appreciates merits British proposal. However as British know, RLG has already formulated a three-step approach to SYG of which first two already implemented. RLG must retain sovereign right to decide whether and when third step, i.e., request for observer should be taken. This will depend to large extent on RLG assessment of military situation.

3. If and when RLG decides to make such approach, RLG would like terms of reference limited at first to inspection situation on frontiers with DRV. Later, depending on findings of observer and situation in Laos, RLG might request broadening terms of reference to include recommendations to relieve tensions.

4. RLG would of course wish to reserve right to receive persona grata observer and would expect his report to be addressed not only to SYG (and if SYG wished to Geneva co-chairmen) but also to RLG, principal party concerned.

5. RLG would welcome British support for RLG request to appoint observer when time comes and would appreciate value of having such request supported by both UK and USSR as co-chairmen. However RLG would have to insist that whatever is done must not imply resumption by RLG of any responsibilities under Geneva Accords (which RLG regards as completed) and would not wish observer's terms of reference broadened as result use of force to include mediation with DRV.

6. At your discretion you may tell RLG we consider most important they retain sympathetic British support in present situation and that RLG, UK and US maintain unified position in face any Communist efforts to split us. This not to imply we believe RLG should accept any British proposal they find objectionable.[4]

Telegram 277 reported that Phoui now opposed the U.N. observer idea and thought that with U.S. assistance the situation in the north could be controlled. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–959) All these documents are included in the microfiche supplement.

[4] On August 11, Smith presented Phoui with the views set forth in this telegram. Phoui stated that Crown Prince Savang wanted a U.N. observer, but not a mediator. Phoui was therefore recommending to Foreign Minister Khamphan Panya that he meet with British Ambassador Lincoln on the morning of August 12 to inform him of the Lao decision to seek a U.N. observer. (Telegram 301 from Vientiane, August 12; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1259; included in the microfiche supplement)

7. FYI. Despite uncoordinated and perhaps premature British initiative we anxious to consult closely in working out solution which all concerned can support. Department believes any successful UN initiative would require substantial agreement between US, UK, and RLG.

Dillon.

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241. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 14, 1959—8:17 p.m.

212. Vientiane's 325 and 328.[2] Department notes Foreign Minister confident of UK support of RLG request to SYG for UN observer (your 325 paragraph 5). However, appears be no assurance from rest of Foreign Minister's remarks that this will, in fact, be the case. Department believes Ambassador should seek appointment Prime and Foreign Ministers soonest and make following points.

1. In view intensive UK and US efforts assist Laos in present difficulties without building up pressures for return ICC, Department considers uncoordinated appeal along lines telegram to SYG described your 328 dangerous and likely be counterproductive. SYG will be placed in difficult and exposed position and will almost certainly realize RLG does not expect him be able comply its unilateral uncoordinated request; move may therefore be costly in terms SYG's good will. Urge RLG strongly not send telegram. It is usual UN procedure not appeal publicly to SYG until matter discussed with him privately. Therefore, believe it would be far preferable to wait until Ngon has had opportunity discuss problem with SYG before reaching final decision.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1459. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher and Michael H. Newlin of UNP, cleared with SEA, and approved by Green. Repeated priority to London and to Paris, New Delhi, Ottawa, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, USUN, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 325, August 14, the Embassy reported that, notwithstanding U.S. advice, the Lao Government was transmitting a request through Ngon Sananikone to the U.N Secretary-General for an observer. The Lao claimed to have already consulted the British and were confident of British support. (*Ibid.*) Telegram 328, August 14, contained a translation of the proposed Lao message to Secretary-General Hammarskjöld requesting an observer. (*Ibid.*) Both telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

2. Since RLG may sincerely desire SYG send observer at later date, for example, if trouble erupts countryside with beginning dry season (paragraph 4, your 328), believe highly undesirable make unilateral approach to SYG at this juncture merely to accomplish relatively limited objectives stated paragraph 2 your 325. Such approach now could seriously prejudice later move when observer might really be needed.

3. If despite your representations RLG sends message, you should strongly urge it not be published and that, in any event, it exclude statement observer should not be national of ICC country. Such statement would be regarded as specifically referring India, would probably be deeply resented by GOI and might also embarrass Canadians.[3]

Dillon

[3] In telegram 336 from Vientiane, the Embassy reported that it had received assurances from the Royal Lao Government that it agreed with the U.S. views, and that nothing would be done until Ambassador Smith returned to Vientiane on August 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1558; included in the microfiche supplement)

242. Editorial Note

At the 417th meeting of the National Security Council, August 18, Allen Dulles gave his briefing on "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." He reported on developments in Laos as follows:

"We have received, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] firm evidence of direction and supply of operations in Laos by North Vietnam. There is, however, no definite evidence of the presence of North Vietnamese troops in Laos. There had been references to 'friendly' soldiers, but we think that these are local Communist rather than Vietnamese, [3 *lines of source text not declassified*]. North Vietnamese aircraft have been busy delivering equipment to Dienbienphu, but the number of flights does not indicate an all-out effort. Three rifle regiments of North Vietnamese have moved into the area immediately north of the demilitarized zone, and on the 3rd and 8th of August two of these moved to the border. A [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] liaison officer found that North Vietnamese military camps in the Vina area had been nearly vacated; presumably these troops had been moved to the Laotian border. Laotian military units had engaged in hit-and-run tactics against the Communists, but at this point it was not clear whether there was more hit or more run.

"The Hanoi and Peiping radios have been busy. They have claimed in propaganda that vast areas of Laos have been 'liberated'. The North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists have centered their attacks primarily upon the United States. The Soviets, on the other hand, perhaps because of the impending exchange of visits between the President and Khrushchev, have centered their attack on the Laotians. They have attacked the Phoui government for permitting U.S. 'bases' to be established in Laos. The United Kingdom made a move yesterday, suggesting that the UN Secretary General send an observer to Laos. We had also just received a Soviet note on Laos which argues that the United States has put military forces in Laos in violation of the Geneva Agreements.

"Secretary Dillon said that he did not believe that there was any particular pattern of softness in the way the Soviets had been acting. Their note and other statements were strong, and while they had been directed primarily against Laos, they also criticized the United States. Moreover there had been an increasing harassment by the East Germans of supply vehicles going to Berlin. These vehicles were being stopped between existing checkpoints; apparently the East Germans were attempting to establish their right to take such action. In response to an inquiry, Secretary Dillon said that the supply vehicles involved were military vehicles.

"The Director of Central Intelligence said that he didn't mean to suggest that the Soviets had taken a soft line, only that they had concentrated their attack upon Laos." (Memorandum of discussion by Johnson, August 26; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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243. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, August 19, 1959.

SUBJECT

Situation in Laos

The Royal Lao Government decided last week to send a special representative to the UN to discuss the situation in Laos with the Secretary General and possibly to make an appeal to him to send an observer. The representative, Ngon Sananikone, brother of the Prime Minister, arrived this morning in New York, Wednesday, August 19.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1759. Secret. Drafted by Chapman and cleared with FE and SEA. Murphy was Acting Secretary.

The Lao Government's decision to appeal to the Secretary General was triggered by the British presentation of their proposal to have the UK and USSR, as co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, request the Secretary General to send an observer to Laos who would report both to the co-Chairmen and the Secretary General. The co-Chairmen then would consider the matter further to see what additional action was required. Upon being informed of this proposal, the Lao Government feared that unless it took some action first the world would have the impression Laos was in the wrong and had something to hide.

On the afternoon of Monday, August 17, the British presented their proposal to Soviet Ambassador Malik, who argued for the return of the ICC and only grudgingly agreed to forward the proposal to his Government.[2] The Soviet Government has not yet given its answer.

We seriously doubt that the Soviets will accede to the British proposal. Such an agreement would mean a reversal of the position that the Communist Bloc has so far taken, namely, that the situation in Laos can only be resolved by the recall of the ICC. As an indication of Soviet attitudes, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday, August 18, issued a lengthy statement attacking the Royal Government primarily and the U.S. secondarily for violating the Geneva Agreement.[3]

We are concerned that (1) the Lao representative might make a premature formal request for an observer to the Secretary General and (2) that the Soviets will turn down the British proposal. Since we believe that the Secretary General will not accede to a unilateral request from the Lao Government and will only agree to send an observer if this request were backed by the co-Chairmen, the effect of a Soviet refusal would be to force the Secretary General to turn down the Lao request and to put the British in a highly embarrassing position. (The British already consider themselves to be in a difficult—if not ludicrous—position.)

If, as we expect, the Soviets turn down the British proposal and if our analysis of the causes of the fighting in Laos is correct, then we should expect a further outbreak of fighting in northern Laos following a Soviet refusal. The purpose of creating new tensions would be to add further pressures for the recall of the ICC.

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[2] Reported in telegram 884 from London, August 18. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–1859)

[3] Reference is to a statement of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, August 17, charging that the Royal Government of Laos had violated the Geneva Agreement of 1954 by delaying the integration of the Pathet Lao, by evading the obligation for ICC control over the introduction of foreign military personnel into Laos, and by violating the November 1957 agreement for a political settlement with the Pathet Lao. The Soviet Union also charged that the Lao Government was flooding the country with U.S. servicemen. The Soviet statement is summarized in Department of State *Bulletin*, September 7, 1959, p. 344, footnote 2.

While diplomatic moves are probably the only ones which have a real chance of bringing peace to Laos, nevertheless we feel we should help strengthen the Lao Army in order to maintain its morale and will to resist, as well as to strengthen its security posture. Our representatives in Laos and CINCPAC have strongly supported a Lao request for raising the force levels as follows:

Army from 25,000 to 29,000
Auto-defense from 16,000 to 20,000.[4]

The proposal is under urgent study.

[4] In a memorandum to Bell, August 19, Weiss described a meeting on the morning of August 19 among Murphy, Parsons, Green, other FE staff, and himself, in which Acting Secretary Murphy queried the rationale and cost behind the request for raising Lao force levels. Murphy required the recommendation of Ambassador Smith before definite action was taken. (Department of State, G/PM Files: Lot 64 D 351, Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

244. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 19, 1959—9:33 p.m.

247. For Ambassador from Parsons. Re PEO 1419–59.[2]

1. Your separate message mentioned reftel not received.[3]

2. We agree fully situation serious and that special measures should be undertaken support and strengthen FAL.[4] Only question is which measures will be most effective, both in short term and in long run, in protecting independence and integrity of Laos and rest of SEA.

3. Any increased aid to Laos will have to be justified to Congress on solid grounds or Lao program may be jeopardized and MSP as whole possibly damaged. Defense has given preliminary estimate proposals will cost some $6 million which at least initially will probably

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/8–1959. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by SEA and FE, and approved by Green.

[2] CINCPAC apparently repeated this telegram to OSD/ISA and JCS as telegram 170510Z, August 17. (Department of State, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos, 1959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Apparent reference to telegram PEO 1408–59, USARMA 151015Z, August 15. (Washington National Records Centers, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 581.1 Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] The FAL (French abbreviation for Armed Forces of Laos) included all military and paramilitary units; ANL generally referred to the regular army.

have to be diverted from other FE programs with consequent difficulties other countries. Since we feel we must inform key members of Congress of anticipated measures involving increased aid and since they bound to ask searching questions for which we in any event would wish to have as complete information and justification as possible, urgently desire detailed info on following points:

a) Would not addition of 4000 untrained men to army and 4000 to Auto-Defense further dilute these already untrained and ineffective forces to point of creating greater problems rather than adding to their strength?

b) FAL has stated that raising this additional manpower would present no problem as it could recruit veterans. However most veterans are of older generation with families and if recruited on same basis other members FAL presumably would receive same pay and allowances. In consequence they would add sizable new burden to budget. We appreciate political advantages giving veterans jobs but might not these advantages be dissipated and on contrary turned into disadvantages when emergency concluded and veterans discharged? Such handling might generate considerable bitterness. Assume Lao realize force augmentation would be strictly temporary and terminable at US discretion.

c) Since present emergency has undoubtedly posed serious problems to training program is not a new approach to program required? Would you consider it politically possible and militarily feasible to have French and US teams train units in the field, in order to achieve quick, solid and lasting results?

d) Is conscription feasible? Has this question been studied, and if so with what findings?

e) If we accede to RLG request for increased force levels, would it be feasible to have new recruits raised on temporary basis and paid only salaries but no allowances?

f) Do you feel there is any element other than emergency military necessity involved in augmentation proposal? Have French or others who recently assessed crisis as less serious than felt by our observers expressed any views on need for and practicability of force increases at this time?

4. While above info will be needed realize it will not be feasible to furnish all immediately. Appreciate your forwarding answers as they become available.

Dillon

245. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 21, 1959—1:21 p.m.

256. For Ambassador from Murphy and Parsons. We are now at point where far-reaching decisions must be taken affecting augmentation FAL force levels, implementation training program and new diplomatic actions in support of integrity and full independence of RLG. Yet Department seriously handicapped in making decisions these critical issues through lack of adequate Embassy situation assessments and your independent recommendations on courses of action. Information requested in Deptel 247 of August 19[2] illustrates our urgent needs, as well as reports on psychological climate, government and popular attitudes, psywar moves, etc.

With all your preoccupations and harassments, we hesitate to make these additional demands on your time but it is matter of first priority to have your broad independent evaluations and recommendations if we are to move with the circumspect alacrity we all desire. We recognize particular difficulty making assessments under circumstances prevailing in Laos but we do need and value your urgent evaluation with clear indication of factual and conjectural bases therefor.

Herter

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/8–2159. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Green, cleared with SEA and FE, and approved by Murphy.

[2] *Supra.*

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246. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Washington, August 22, 1959—7 p.m.

389. For Parsons from Ambassador. Deptel 247.[2] Following replies to six points listed reference telegram a through f, on which Department urgently desired detailed information:

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/8–2259. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution.

[2] Document 244.

a. It is inaccurate to imply ANL is an untrained army and inaccurate to assume all men for new units will be untrained. Estimate 65–70% ANL strength composed of veterans; 25–50% are recruits. Major recruitment for new units will be from veterans. ANL plan as follows: Existing companies will be cadred to form new company. Approximately 30%, officers and NCOs, will be used as cadre. Remaining 70% for new units and 30% to refill old units provided by recalling veterans and recruiting some new men. Auto-defense personnel composed of locally selected veterans familiar with their area. Consequently, reply to question a is no.

b. Important to understand that ANL is a volunteer army. Men accepted for terms of service for 6 months, 1 year, 1 1/2 years or 2 years. Approximately 40,000 reservists available having served average of 4 years—1/3 of these held NCO rank. For period of emergency contract period of service will be 6 months or 1 year. Men accepted for 6 months are all NCOs since only NCOs may enlist for this period; recruits must enlist for 1 year. It is in interest of economy not to hold NCOs too long since they accumulate dependents, hence cost more to support. Laos system of recall is:

(a) Those recallable immediately (first reserve) are those with two–four children.

(b) In next category are those with five children.

In accepting volunteers same order is followed—those with less children taken first. Presently, only those from first reserve being accepted. In view above, no problem foreseen reducing forces after emergency. Best information available here indicates no bitterness will be produced. ANL does understand augmentation temporary and terminable US discretion. Agree sizeable increase to budget will occur. Unavoidable, though, in view of personnel to be recalled and recruited, marital status, dependents, etc. At one time, Laos had law requiring recruits be unmarried. This law had to be revoked since everyone marries very young (17–18 years).

c. Agree that serious problems have been posed, though not insurmountable. Regarding sending French-US teams into field it should be recalled this has always been our desire. Such action would produce more solid and lasting results, though, to obtain quicker results more US personnel would be required—24 teams instead of 12 in order to provide one team per battalion. However, while sending teams into field believed militarily feasible it is not believed politically possible at present time. RLG deadset against this at present for political reasons and doubt if British and other friendly powers yet prepared to accept necessity of such "provocative action."

d. Question as to conscription has been studied and use of conscription has been considered. Policy is that conscription should not be adopted until general mobilization. Believe country not yet reached that danger point. In summary, conscription is feasible but politically not recommended at this time.

e. In view explanation given under b above, answer to question e is unqualified no.

f. Emergency military necessity is primary element involved. It must be recalled, however, we are on record to effect that 25,000-man force is too small for Laos. Realistic force level for Laos computed as 32,700.

Regarding the 2nd question under f:

(1) The following constitutes present local French opinion: French Ambassador agrees situation critical. General D'Arrivere states force augmentation indispensable. Lt. Colonel Delafon, French military attaché stated that, although his June and July intelligence reports on present Laos crisis were optimistic, he now feels situation critical. Latter added that on 21 August he had apprised Paris of present situation and said his point of view now most pessimistic.

(2) The British Ambassador and his counselor called on me this morning to express their concern over the situation in Sam Neua which they believe has turned critical during past 2 weeks. British Ambassador said he has always maintained situation potentially and probably serious although forced to agree with his military attaché's previous intelligence reports that there seemed no definite proof of Viet Minh infiltration and little to indicate extent Viet Minh participation beyond point FAL "should" be able to handle although whether FAL "could in fact" handle in present state of efficiency if possible expansion of dissidence developed he has always doubted. He now considers it probable that expansion is occurring in Sam Neua at least to point where it doubtful if area can be recovered or even held by ANL. I told Tamaboui FAL requests for 4,000 additional volunteers and 4,000 additional auto-defense and told him of our reluctance since last May to permit or finance any expansion beyond 25,000 and 16,000 previously authorized. I told him that all FAL available reserves consisting of 5 battalions already committed Sam Neua area but possibly not enough for even this one area and pointed out that 7 out of 12 battalions intended as central reserve for interventions in incidents such as Sam Neua now tied down to cover areas 4,000 additional volunteers and 4,000 additional supporting auto-defense intended soon to cover. I explained it my understanding that after army fully trained and equipped and police somewhat augmented and trained and roads and communications improved we had hoped and still hope to see FAL reduced to some 16,000, but that in face present circumstances it doubtful whether even double that number would

provide adequate force to insure internal security and adequate border patrol. I concluded that in view of recent developments in Sam Neua, Phong Saly and elsewhere we from our Embassy, army attaché and PEO were now recommending that this 4,000 volunteer temporary increase be granted. What Washington would decide I did not know but it would be helpful to know what Lincoln's personal judgment and that of his military attaché would be. He said he did not know but would study matter.

(3) All answers except French and British attitudes above doublechecked by Heintges with Colonel Phoumi Nosavan, Secretary State for Defense in 2 hour conversation yesterday. Conviction re seriousness of situation and determination to fight it out themselves if we can give them the temporary financing required for the additional 4,000 volunteers and 4,000 auto-defense and thus release the 7 regular battalions now tied down and also permit them to go ahead with rapid training under present program, reflected in my conversation with Phoui reported in separate telegram.

Smith

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247. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, August 24, 1959, 5:15 p.m.[1]

SUBJECT

The Situation in Laos

PARTICIPANTS

State
The Secretary
The Under Secretary
M—Mr. Murphy
G—Mr. Merchant
FE—Mr. Parsons
SEA—Mr. Anderson
SEA—Mr. Chapman
U/MSC—Mr. Bell
U/MSC—Mr. Weiss

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2459. Secret. Drafted by Chapman. At the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting earlier in the day, Assistant Secretary Wilcox raised the issue of the Lao request for a U.N. mediator. Parsons and Murphy expressed surprise at the request since it gave the Pathet Lao equal status in the dispute. There was a long discussion on the Laos situation resulting in a a decision to hold this meeting. (Notes by Calhoun, August 24; *ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

U—Mr. Martin
IO—Mr. Wilcox
H—Mr. White

ICA
Mr. Riddleberger

CIA
Mr. Dulles
Mr. Bissell

OSD
Mr. Irwin
Mr. Shuff
Mr. Knight
Col. Bingham

JCS
Admiral Burke

Mr. Parsons explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the question of supporting increased force levels of the Lao security forces, raising the Army from 25,000 to 29,000 men and the Auto-Defense from 16,000 to 20,000. He said that we were under very great pressure to reach a decision. The increase had been recommended by the Country Team, CINCPAC, DOD and the JCS. As a result of the answer received this week from Vientiane,[2] FE also now recommended this increase.

Mr. Dulles passed out a background paper on the latest intelligence estimates of the situation.[3]

Mr. Parsons remarked that, while the Secretary was still there, he would like also to consider the Lao situation from a broader view, that is, as a serious probe by the Communists. We in FE, Mr. Parsons said, would like to explore various avenues for resolving this situation, notably: the UN; SEATO; what political support Laos might receive from its neighbors which had become increasingly concerned by the situation, and thus indicating to the Communists that there were sanctions in pushing too far; requesting the Government of Thailand to prevent Vietnamese crossing the Mekong; briefing Congress; possible political pressures which might be applied on the occasion of the visit of Khrushchev; finally, we might consider issuing, with France and the UK, a tripartite declaration, such as was done in early 1957.

Mr. Murphy wished to know whether the new recruits would be drawn from the 40,000 veterans who, he understood, were available.

Mr. Parsons answered that the first to be recruited were from the first reserve which consisted of men with smaller families. In answer to another question, he explained that the term "volunteer" in volun-

[2] *Supra.*
[3] Not found.

teer battalion was a misnomer because the entire Lao army was composed of volunteers. However, the mission of the volunteer battalions was the maintenance of internal security in each province. The proposed increase in force levels would mean the release of seven battalions of regular troops, Mr. Parsons explained, which could be used as intervention forces, but which were tied down at present on security duties. When Mr. Dulles questioned the loyalty of the veterans, Mr. Parsons said that he had no late information on the subject but the veterans had generally been considered one of the most patriotic elements in Laos. They had fought and hated the Vietnamese.

The meeting generally agreed with the comments of Mr. Murphy and Mr. Dulles regarding the lack of facts preventing a clear picture of the situation and the difficulty of getting these facts.

The Secretary noted that northern Laos was as heavily wooded as the Malayan jungle and asked what would be lost to Laos if the two northern provinces, which were admittedly poor, were sealed off. Mr. Parsons answered that, in the latter phase of the Indochinese war, fighting was not limited to the two provinces but spread throughout the country, and that the two northern provinces had come under Pathet Lao control when, instead of regrouping as they were required to do, the Pathet Lao had set up a mock government there. It was true however that the two provinces were oriented more toward Tonkin than toward Laos. Admiral Burke stated that even if the two provinces were given up this would not end the fighting and Mr. Murphy added that such an abandonment would give a serious blow to Lao morale.

The Secretary again noted that it had cost some $800,000,000 to restore security in Malaya and, in fact, the situation had not gotten under control until the rebels had been starved out by putting barbed wire around all the villages. Mr. Murphy noted that in northern Laos it was much easier for the rebels to obtain supplies, which they received from North Viet-Nam, than for the rebels in Malaya.

To the Secretary's question whether there was any place where the rebels might be sealed off, Mr. Dulles answered that Laos was ideal terrain for guerrilla warfare and Mr. Parsons added that this was the reason that the only real solution was a political and psychological one.

The Secretary asked whether it was true that there was no evidence of Viet Minh participation. Mr. Murphy then suggested that, in order to control possible Viet Minh participation, South Vietnamese forces might be used to create a diversionary movement in the south, but emphasized that such a decision was a serious one. Mr. Wilcox mentioned that, so far, few Viet Minh had probably crossed into Laos but if a diversionary movement were undertaken, more would cross. Mr. Anderson stated that such a move would provoke a strong reaction on the part of the DRV.

The Secretary asked how many members the ICC had had and how had the Commission carried out its controls, with helicopters or with what means. Mr. Parsons answered that he believed the ICC had 400 or 500 personnel, but that when the Royal Government requested it to investigate a violation of the Agreement, the Commission was always frustrated by the Pathet Lao.

The Secretary then asked, if that were so, what could either a UN or an Indian observer see. Mr. Anderson mentioned that eventually equipment belonging to rebels might be captured.

The Secretary also inquired into the nature of the tribes in the area. Mr. Parsons answered that they were mostly Thais and Meos who straddled the border and who were pretty stratified, the Meos living on the top of mountains, the Thais in the middle, and the Lao in the valleys. In answer to Mr. Murphy's question regarding the present estimated strength of the Lao army of 22,500 in comparison to the authorized strength of 25,000, Mr. Parsons explained that some 1,500 slots had been left open to integrate the two Pathet Lao battalions and that there are 700 ineffectives.

A discussion of costs ensued. It was pointed out that the original estimate of some $6,000,000 was rough and included various items beside the proposed force increase. This increase alone was estimated at between $4 and $5 million. Admiral Burke stated that the JCS felt this increase quite important. He said that everyone concerned had recommended this increase which would take a little time to put into effect. If there is a mistake in judgment, it would mean the waste of 4 or 5 million dollars. If, on the other hand, it was a mistake on the other side, it would mean another red spot on the map. Mr. Murphy asked whether the increase was not being made too fast to become useful, to which the Admiral answered that it might not be effective but it was likely that it would be more so now than three or four months hence.

Mr. Dulles remarked that we believed the Viet Minh would hesitate to move into Laos in organized units.

Mr. Dillon then asked what had happened to the U.S. Attaché's opinion that training should be undertaken first before the force levels were increased. Mr. Parsons answered that this opinion had been given on June 1, and, at that time, we also felt that no increase should be undertaken before the army was properly trained. Circumstances had now changed, Mr. Parsons added.

Mr. Irwin then stated that so far we have hesitated, but the field has remained solid, and the questions have been resolved. Thus, we end up with a feeling that it is a gamble with money and time.

Mr. Dillon raised the question of publicizing our decision and Mr. Parsons agreed that it would have a very important psychological effect but that the Lao view should be taken into account. He himself thought that we should publicize our decision.

Mr. Dillon then inquired into what was happening in the UN on this matter. Mr. Parsons said that it was rather unsatisfactory. The Lao Government had been dead set against mediation because it did not wish to be considered on a par with North Viet-Nam. However, the Lao representative, Ngon Sananikone, had agreed to the Secretary General's proposal which envisaged two steps: (1) to search for a "mediation formula" by an Indian in Hanoi and Vientiane, and (2) once a formula was agreed upon, then the Secretary General would be requested to appoint a neutral mediator who might be suggested by the ICC. Mr. Dillon expressed the opinion that it was important to publicize the Lao appeal to the UN, so that it could be clearly indicated we were seeking a peaceful solution beside making a show of force. Mr. Wilcox explained that so far all the steps had been made on a confidential basis and that, therefore, the Secretary General was hesitant, because he did not think he could send an observer unless both parties agreed to it. The Secretary General's position was questioned both by Mr. Dillon and Mr. Dulles. Mr. Dulles pointed out that the Communists had declared the fighting in Laos to be a civil war and the Secretary inquired into what was to be mediated since only one party declared itself aggrieved. Mr. Murphy thought it would be advisable to inform Hammarskjold that we were responding to the desperate appeal of a friendly nation. Mr. Wilcox remarked that there previously had been a question of sending an observer but that the Secretary General's letter to Nehru of Saturday mentioned a "mediator."[4] It was evident that a frame of reference would have to be worked out later for whoever was appointed. The Secretary General felt his authority was limited in particular because of the ICC's existence. The Secretary stated he could not understand why the UN should ask the Government of India for a mediator when a mediator was not wanted and when the Indian on the ICC had not given the Lao Government a square deal. Mr. Wilcox explained that the Indian would not be the mediator but that a frame of reference would have to be worked out. Mr. Irwin added that as soon as you asked for a mediator, you put the Lao Government in a difficult position.

The meeting decided that there was nothing else to do but agree to the proposed increase in the force level which was estimated to cost between four and five million dollars. It was felt that this increase would give the Lao a lift in morale and would also act as a deterrent to the insurgents for, as Mr. Parsons pointed out, there was a limit on how far the Pathet Lao could go with their own people. Beyond that, the Viet Minh would have to intervene. Admiral Burke then suggested that, in view of the many small requests for matériel and equipment

[4] Apparent reference to a letter from Hammarskjöld to Nehru, August 15, not found.

which would have to be met quickly, such as those President Diem had received the other day from the Lao Government, we authorize CINCPAC to provide equipment and matériel available within his component commands not exceeding $1,000,000 in value without reference to Washington for authorization.[5] When Mr. Dillon asked whether the Joint Chiefs of Staff were quite clear on the military necessity for this increase, the Admiral stated that they were, that something was going on and if Laos were lost, this loss would have a deep effect on all the other countries in the area.

It was agreed that the announcement of this decision should be carefully timed so that the Lao Government, our Allies and interested parties could be informed in time. It was agreed that we might prepare a statement for the President to be used at his press conference on Tuesday, August 25,[6] and that we should cable that very night to Vientiane and other interested posts requesting our Ambassador to pass on the substance of this decision to the governments to which they are accredited.[7] It was agreed that Congress should be briefed on Tuesday, after the President's press conference and that an announcement should be made on Wednesday.

In the course of the discussion, Mr. Murphy asked whether it would be so bad to have SEATO become involved and Mr. Parsons answered that we were considering the advisability of suggesting to the Thai Foreign Minister, Thanat, the convening of a special SEATO meeting which, because it was conspicuous, might have a deterrent effect on the Communists.

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[5] This authorization plus the decision of the U.S. Government to support 40 additional 100-man volunteer companies and auto-defense corps at strength not to exceed 20,000 was transmitted to CINCPAC and Vientiane in joint State–Defense telegram 282, August 24. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/8–2259)

[6] Eisenhower made no prepared statement on Laos at his news conference of August 25, but he did answer a question on Laos. See *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959*, pp. 594–595. The Department of State Spokesman read a statement on Laos at the August 26 daily press briefing; see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 14, 1959, p. 374.

[7] Circular telegram 173 to Vientiane, Paris, London, Ottawa, New Delhi, Phnom Penh, Saigon, Bangkok, Rangoon, Kuala Lumpur, Canberra, Wellington, Manila, Karachi, and Buenos Aires, August 24. (Department of State, Central Files 751J.5–MSP/8–2459; included in the microfiche supplement)

248. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 24, 1959—8 p.m.

403. For Parsons and Murphy from Ambassador. Re Deptel 256[2] (Embassy would have no objection to distribution outside Department if desired).

After 17 months in Laos I find RLG still facing same potential and actual external threats as when I arrived but internally, during last twelve months it has, through monetary, fiscal and administrative reforms and skillful political leadership of Phoui Sananikone supported by LHL and CDNI and by US financial assistance, greatly enhanced its chance of winning its battle of ballots against the Communists. By training programs more recently developed or developing for the army and police another ten months could show considerable improvement in the chance of either (1) winning the internal battle of bullets that has all along been inevitable when Communists decided they no longer had good chance of winning battle of ballots without bullets against RLG, or (2) forcing Vietminh at least to supply and infiltrate so heavily to continue battle of bullets that FAL can produce incontrovertible proof that might bring effective UN or, as a last resort, SEATO intervention.

I say "could" rather than "should" for four reasons (1) there are limits to RLG wisdom, political, economic and military know-how, ingenuity and determination as well as to Lao human, material and fiscal resources that require a type of continual guidance and assured support which US Government has so far seemed find difficult or impossible to supply in the amounts and with the timeliness required to assure the RLG making effective headway against internal Communist pressures supported from outside Laos.

(2) The extent to which Communists can interfere by stirring up active opposition to the government and outlying areas will depend in part on (A) the size and effectiveness of the RLG's efforts to reach the people with its aid programs, (B) rapidity with which minimum roads are broken through or improved and rapidity with which airfields, telecommunications facilities, and transport equipment are provided, and (C) upon the relative effectiveness of FAL and police. However, it will also depend in part, and at first probably more largely, upon extent to which Vietminh and ChiComs are willing to back, supply,

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/8–2459. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution.

[2] Document 245.

support and perhaps cadre the Pathet Lao. This would appear to be limited by (A) possible international diplomatic or UN disapproval and (B) possible effective UN or SEATO intervention.

(3) The chance of limiting clandestine VM intervention effectively through diplomatic or UN pressures does not seem very promising. By an ordinary definition of intervention, such as Turbay's at recent meeting Foreign Ministers of members OAS in Santiago, there would seem to be no reason to question that VM have intervened in Laos. From the best information available here it seems certain they have permitted radio broadcasts that encouraged rebellion in Laos, they have allowed the recruiting and training of revolutionaries for service in Laos, they have supplied weapons to start a civil war in Laos and permitted those weapons to be exported into Laos. The lack of roads and communications facilities, the rugged and jungle-covered character of the terrain and the lack of clear-cut racial differentiation enabling easy identifications of infiltrees of VM nationality make it difficult to provide proof the VM have also infiltrated Laos with cadres and provocateurs and perhaps even temporarily invaded Laos with regular VM border battalions to launch the rebellion. Nevertheless, Laos seems [*so?*] obviously the victim that Indian, Russian and Polish pressures for revival of ICC and earlier British and recent Cambodian and UNSYG pressures for a "mediator" rather than a "factfinder" disturb RLG and make it reluctant accept assistance offered. Even if a truly neutral factfinder, observer or mediator is found, VM intervention on a scale large enough to hamper RLG considerably could still be very difficult to detect.

I had been most hopeful that recent French and British cooperative attitude on Laos could be developed into a team approach both locally and internationally which, in latter field particularly, would be most helpful. I had even hoped that with recent developments of what seemed clearer Indian understanding of Communism we might have a change for the better in their attitude on Laos. For the moment at least, the extent to which it will be possible to develop such understanding cooperation now seems likely to be much more limited that I had hoped.

(4) The crux of the problem now faced both politically and militarily seems to lie with the minorities. Past Lao governments have apparently refused to admit the existence of a major "minorities" problem. Even the present RLG had found it difficult to take adequate measures to recognize and meet it. American suggestions for a more direct approach were turned down tactfully by Phoui last winter who preferred to try to meet the need through a general rural self help program rather than any moves especially keyed to the minorities. I believe he can now be persuaded to cooperate but it will be much more difficult to make headway under present conditions.

Fortunately there has been a tightening of conservative ranks and the battle will not be within the government but between the conservative government front against alien supported Communists for the control and loyalty of the people of Laos, particularly the minorities. However, the time limits and the additional strains [*constraints*?] that must be met mean new dimensions in the amount and character of US aid required. Furthermore it makes it imperative that the operations and staffing of US agencies here be adjusted to meet the need for the type of American guidance and assistance that will now be required. For instance if I am to keep the Department abreast of significant political, economic and military trends the Embassy's staff, which is already embarrassingly inadequate for this purpose, must be increased along with those of USOM, USIS and PEO.

I therefore consider it clear that the RLG is being forced into a new state [*stage*?] in its battle to preserve the independence of Laos from Communist domination. Pedestrian as they were, RLG plans [apparent omission in the source text] now in the loyalty of its people including the minorities, by economic, social and educational development programs and constitutional and administrative reforms and to win their confidence by programs of army and political training and political re-education, could in time have made it difficult for the Communists to win internally with either ballots or bullets. I am convinced that the Communists are now trying to prevent the implementation of these programs by every means available short of open invasion.

The encouragement in reference telegram to give first priority to keeping the Department provided with my broad independent evaluations and recommendations most valuable to me since for past two months key members staff all agencies have been devoting at my insistence long hours overtime to helping me prepare evaluation of new situation I saw coming and to meet my requirements for specific recommendations and programs designed to meet it adequately.

In immediately following[3] and subsequent telegrams and airgrams I will cover all aspects of situation and make specific recommendations as to measures required or desirable.

Smith

[3] In telegram 404 from Vientiane, August 25, the Embassy listed immediate requirements which the Department could use as a checklist in aiding the U.S. missions in Laos to meet the current emergency. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2559; included in the microfiche supplement)

249. Memorandum of a Meeting, Chequers, United Kingdom, August 29, 1959, 3:30 p.m.[1]

US/MC/20a

PARTICIPANTS

United States	*United Kingdom*
President Eisenhower	Prime Minister Macmillan
Secretary of State Herter	Foreign Secretary Lloyd
Deputy Secretary Gates	Sir Norman Brook
Mr. Merchant	Ambassador Caccia
Mr. Irwin	Sir Anthony Rumbold
Mr. Berding	Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar
Mr. Hagerty	Mr. Blye
General Goodpaster	Mr. de Zulueta
Major Eisenhower	Mr. Evans
Mr. White	Mr. Wilding

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

Laos

With regard to Laos, the next subject raised, Mr. Lloyd reported that the UK Government was very worried about this situation. He had received a communication from Soviet Ambassador Malik[2] suggesting the possibility that the three chairmen of the delegations previously making up the ICC might return. The UK Government was now exploring the possibility of the three chairmen of the delegations going back. This formula possibly was intended by the Soviets as a face-saving device to the Laotian Government, but to make this workable it would be necessary to get a new Indian chairman. This would be easier if the Canadian were also changed. The President inquired whether there was anything new on Laos, and Secretary Herter reported that there had been a new raid. Mr. Lloyd reported that the evidence indicates that the dissident influence is getting beyond the two northern provinces and pointed out that we were dealing with a jungle area. In view of British experience in Malaya, it was doubtful whether the Laotian Government through military measures would be able to bring the dissidents under control.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Berding. President Eisenhower and Secretary Herter visited Bonn, London, and Paris, August 26–September 4, for talks with European leaders. They were in the United Kingdom August 27–September 2.

[2] Reference is to an oral communication by Soviet Ambassador to the United Kingdom Yakov Malik to the British Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Lansdowne. A translation of this message is in Secto 13 from London, August 28. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2859; included in the microfiche supplement)

Mr. Macmillan added that it was very important to try to prevent the area from being won over by the Communists. It was even more important at this juncture, when an effort was being made for a détente in the West, to hold the Communists in the Far East in check. The United States was familiar with the record of the British Government; that when Taiwan was threatened last year, the U.K. had stood by the U.S. The problem in Laos was technical; "you can't get at it". President Eisenhower inquired whether the British had any proposals. Secretary Herter added that the U.S. was now providing equipment for Laos, but it was a very tricky situation to avoid being in violation of Article 9 of the Geneva Agreements on Laos.

Mr. Lloyd added that the previous day he and Secretary Herter had discussed the long-term problem;[3] that the Laos situation was quite different from that of Korea where the U.S. had been in a position to and had in fact provided massive support. Mr. Gates mentioned parenthetically that the U.S. had no intention of sending five divisions to Laos.

President Eisenhower said that the United Kingdom, as well as the United States, should endeavor to control the Communists in Laos and to take action if necessary. We must give the Laotian people some hope against the Communists. We must together get into the problems and not merely talk procedures. We couldn't just talk about getting someone to carry the job but should get into it ourselves. The President said that it must be an indigenous effort. That we should get the Philippines or some other Asian group to do something. The White peoples couldn't do much alone. The Secretary added that it would be a mistake to attempt to get someone to mediate, which would suggest two sides to the issue within Laos, and that we had to recognize that both Hammarskjold and the Laotians had handled the situation there rather badly. Instead of mediators, the presence of observers would serve as a psychological deterrent to the Communists from the North. Mr. Macmillan concluded by saying that we are agreed on that.

[Here follows discussion of unrelated subjects.]

[3] This discussion, August 28, took place at the British Foreign Office at 4:30 p.m. (Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199; included in the microfiche supplement)

250. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 29, 1959—3:45 p.m.

348. Re Vientiane's 444, repeated USUN 21, London 44.[2]

1. Under UN Charter SYG is impartial international civil servant. You should make clear to RLG SYG's limited independent authority. This is why SYG has sought acquiescence Geneva co-chairmen or ICC to appointment by him of observer.

2. Because your personal suggestion Khamphan Panya constitutionally not feasible, you should emphasize in future conversations RLG that SYG cannot dispatch factfinder or observer whose function would be determine whether DRV intervention has occurred simply on basis RLG's request. As SYG made clear his August 27 statement (USUN's 269 rptd info Vientiane 2),[3] he can send factfinder or observer in Laos-type situation on request by parties to dispute, SC, or GA.

3. Both UK co-chairmen approach and SYG two-stage proposal designed obtain agreement both sides; i.e., Free World and Communist bloc, to dispatch of factfinder while minimizing role ICC. Soviets have apparently rejected co-chairmen approach and advanced unacceptable counterproposal (London's 32 to Vientiane).[4] SYG's proposals, therefore, deserve fair opportunity yield results, particularly if observer rather than mediator were sought.

4. FYI. If SYG's proposals fail, only remaining possibility for RLG obtain observer, whom it now seems to want, would be through formal appeal either SC or GA. For reasons we will elaborate later, we continue believe premature press for further UN action. End FYI.

Dillon

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2759. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Michael H. Newlin of UNP, cleared with SEA, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to USUN, London, Paris, New Delhi, Ottawa, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In this telegram, August 27, Smith reported he discussed with Khamphan Panya the possibility of requesting a U.N. factfinder to assess if there were sufficient evidence of North Vietnamese intervention in the north. (*Ibid.*;included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Telegram 269, August 27, transmitted the text of Hammarskjld's statement. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2759; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In this telegram, August 27, sent from London as 1117 and repeated to Vientiane as 32, the Embassy reported a conversation in which British Foreign Office officials stated that the Soviet Union had rejected the factfinder idea in favor of an investigation by an ICC representative who would report to the Geneva Cochairmen. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2759; included in the microfiche supplement)

251. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy)[1]

Washington, September 1, 1959.

SUBJECT

Your Discussions With JCS on September 2 Regarding Laos

General Picher has indicated to us that the Joint Chiefs wish to have a general discussion of the Laos situation with particular reference to U.S. courses of action. He has informally sent Mr. Green a copy (Tab A)[2] of the briefing sheet which the Joint Staff has prepared for the Chiefs at their meeting with you tomorrow.[3]

I believe it would be useful if you could give the Chiefs the benefit of our general views on how the Laos situation should be met. In this connection, the paper at Tab B may be helpful to you.

At Tab C you will find a list of (I) the actions taken to date in improving the RLG's position (notably that of the Army) to resist Communist pressures, and (II) actions now under consideration for improving the RLG's position. (Tabs B and C will be largely responsive to Tab A.)

At Tab D is a paper showing the current position of various key countries toward initiatives in the UN and the ICC for sending observers or mediators to Laos.

Tab B

OUTLINE ANALYSIS OF COUNTERMEASURES IN LAOS[4]

A. Communist Objectives

1. Presumed specific minimum objectives include: (a) Disruption of RLG's economic, social and educational development programs; (B) Disrupting the implementation of the new FAL training program; and (c) Regaining at least the degree of Communist influence in Lao Government affairs as existed in 1957.

2. Possible broader objectives include: (a) Maintaining tensions and continuing to keep the free world off balance; (b) Pressures for a summit meeting or for counterconcessions in the Eisen-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–159. Secret. Drafted by Green.

[2] Tabs A, C, and D are included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] No record of the meeting with the JCS has been found.

[4] Secret. Drafted by Green.

hower–Khrushchev talks; (c) Upsetting the general stabilization process going on in SEA and South Asia over the past 5 years; and (e) Ultimate re-establishment of Communist control in Laos.

B. Communist Methods

1. To carry out the above objectives by various means short of open or clearly identifiable invasion.

2. A principal method is psychological warfare conducted by limited military elements (ex-Pathet Lao soldiers, local sympathizers and tribal peoples) against peasants and hill people who, being impressionable, uninformed and widely dissatisfied, are susceptible to psychological warfare tactics.

3. On the diplomatic front, a principal means is pressure for the revival of the ICC, Laos, and utilization of the ICC for demoralizing the RLG and setting the clock back in Laos.

C. U.S. Objectives

1. Prevent the loss of Laos to Communist control, even at the cost of direct U.S. intervention.

2. Enhance the ability and determination of the RLG to maintain internal security and to proceed with measures for economic and social development.

3. Ultimately root out all armed dissidents, recognizing that this difficult task will take time and that inordinate risks in the attempt to shorten the time should be avoided.

D. U.S. Countermeasures To Assist the RLG

1. With regard to strengthening the RLG and its Army:

(a) Give that degree of additional military and other assistance necessary for preserving Laos from Communist control and for improving the stability and progress of Laos.

(b) Ensure as far as possible the uninterrupted continuation of long-range economic, social and educational development programs, despite Communist pressures to disrupt those programs.

(c) Stress to the RLG the urgent need for major efforts to remove antagonisms and suspicions among minority peoples in Laos (who together outnumber the Lao in Laos). These minority peoples will otherwise be highly susceptible to Communist pressures.

(d) Improve RLG capabilities for identifying outside intervention. This will help deter such intervention in at least its more naked forms.

(e) Improve RLG capabilities to localize Communist insurgency as far as possible into defined pockets, with a view ultimately to eliminating these pockets. (This may require many months or years, judging from Malayan experience.)

2. *With regard to UN and other Diplomatic measures in support of the RLG:*

(a) The chances of discouraging clandestine external Communist intervention through UN or other diplomatic measures do not seem promising, but keeping the issue in the forefront of international attention through, for example, UN activity or newspaper publicity, will help deter identifiable DRV or Chicom intervention. We must always appear anxious to be working for a UN solution.

(b) However we should probably avoid pressing for any major United Nations (SC or GA) initiative at this time because:

(i) Evidence of DRV intervention is circumstantial;
(ii) UN prestige should not be prematurely engaged, but reserved for critical needs;
(iii) Pressing for UN measures invites Communist counterpressures for the ICC, and some countries like the UK are soft on the ICC;
(iiii) It is possible that the Communists, having discovered that there is little disposition in South and Southeast Asia for imposing the ICC on a reluctant Laos, might wish to let the issue simmer down at least for a while and we should not make moves which would obstruct that possible simmering down process from occurring.

(c) Our statements and diplomatic approaches should stress that Laos is a sovereign nation possessing the inherent right of protecting its borders and otherwise preserving its integrity; that its limited self-defense measures constitute no threat to anyone except those trying to sabotage the nation's progress and security. We should not allow the real issues to become obscured by debates over provisions of the Geneva Accords and the "legality" of the ICC.

(d) On the other hand, Laos should be encouraged to profess neutrality and to abide by the general spirit of the Geneva Agreements. The latter should be respected so far as possible consistent with our major objective of preserving Laos from Communist penetration.

3. *With regard to SEATO:*

(a) Should attempts to secure the Laotian Government by political means against an armed Communist threat fail, the question of SEATO military intervention may be expected to arise because:

(i) SEATO's prestige would be dangerously and possibly fatally undermined should the Laotian Government be overthrown by Communist armed force, or its composition changed by evident Communist intimidation, whether or not SEATO intervention had taken place.
(ii) Even apart from the involvement of SEATO prestige, the likely additional strategic and political consequences of Communist domination of Laos would dangerously weaken the Western position in South East Asia.

(b) Firm support from SEATO's Asian members, particularly Thailand, is an essential precondition to SEATO action.

(c) United Nations endorsement may not be a political pre-requisite for SEATO intervention (in fact maintenance of SEATO's prestige might depend on its ability to act where the United Nations fails), but sympathetic acquiescence on the part of a majority of the United Nations members and preferably formal endorsement by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly would be most desirable.

(d) Until such time as SEATO might be called upon to intervene, SEATO's activities should be played in a low key. Its prestige must not be prematurely engaged; on the other hand, it cannot conceal—not that it should attempt to do so—the fact that it is keeping a close watch on the developing situation. This should be done with minimal publicity as long as military activities in Laos are light.

4. With regard to other Actions:

(a) Bearing in mind Moscow's primary position in the Communist cosmos and bearing in mind probable Moscow desires not to interfere with Khrushchev's current sweetness-and-light campaign, we should pin the blame on Moscow as far as possible for Communist intervention in Laos.

(b) If necessary, the issue might be discussed directly between top U.S. and Soviet representatives.

(c) A U.S. military build-up in the West Pacific may at some stage become desirable in order to hearten friends and discourage foes.

(d) If all diplomatic efforts fail and the issue must be resolved by arms, then be prepared to take the necessary military measures. The U.S. cannot afford the loss of Laos.

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252. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 3, 1959—7:57 p.m.

387. Ambassador from Murphy and Parsons. Current U.S. countermeasures to help RLG preserve territorial integrity of Laos envisage that the Communists are probably probing and that the appropriate degree of response would be that which contains and discourages

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–359. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Green, cleared by Parsons, and approved by Murphy.

probing thrusts without broadening dimensions of military struggle. We have furthermore had to take into account attitudes of interested free world countries like UK, France and India, and have reckoned that a too prominent injection of U.S. into the Lao scene might have provocative aspects which might stir things up diplomatically and militarily.

However, latest fragmentary reports from Sam Neua sector[2] denote a degree of undeniable DRV supported intervention that implies existence of a new situation possibly justifying abandonment of current ground rules and even intervention by friendly non RLG forces.

You will of course appreciate that it is therefore a matter of utmost importance that major effort be made to assemble and analyze facts relating to recent coordinated Communist drive across Nam Ma river, the number of forces involved and whence they might have come, verification of reports of howitzers and other Communist equipment implicating Hanoi. Also have any POW's been taken and interrogated? Are any shell fragments obtainable for analysis?

Trust report above matters obtainable from RLG government itself (not just from Phoumi). What we need of course are facts and hard evidence, not opinions. Also appreciate your continuing independent evaluation of RLG supplied facts and evidence and of holding capabilities RLG forces.

Another subject: In your opinion, would RLG consult us before appealing to SEATO? It is imperative that they do in order to avoid possible premature or unnecessary broadening of conflict.

As you no doubt realize, we may be faced with very serious decisions in next few days repercussions of which involve U.S. interests elsewhere and indeed interests of many other countries. We cannot make these decisions on basis information made available to press and attachés together by General Ouan. If in fact no hard intelligence can be procured, we must at least have the considered evaluation and reaction of the Royal Government including most especially the Prime Minister and Crown Prince if possible. These together with your considered judgment will be of great value to us in determining whether Lao crisis has reached proportions of major Communist aggression against free world country. A reaction appropriate to that situation is obviously of far greater moment than steps thus far taken in hopes of meeting and deterring limited probes. We rely on your discretion to

[2] Apparent reference to messages from the U.S. Army Attaché in Laos to the Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, CX–171, DTG 011300Z September and CX–172, DTG 011500Z September, both September 1. (Both *ibid.*, 751J.00/9–159)

maintain necessary contact with RLG in such a way as not to stimulate any unwarranted or irresponsible demands upon us in attempt exploit our evident concern.

Dillon

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253. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 3, 1959—6 p.m.

518. CINCPAC for POLAD. For Murphy and Parsons. Manila also pass information MLG. Embtel 496,[2] CX–174.[3] Following are initial observations and recommendations required by development latest Communist offensive north northeast Sam Neua province, reported reference telegrams and intervening telegrams.

Observations:

1. After repeated long and searching discussions with Heintges and ARMATT, have concluded, with their complete concurrence, that while FAL should be able to contain and perhaps later throw back and mop up enemy forces which have recently entered country from North Vietnam it obviously will not be able to do so if there are further incursions of the nature and size of the August 30 incursion.

2. It seems certain enough that further incursions into Lao territory by Communist-trained VM units will be too big for FAL to handle. Whatever their exact number, the DRV has the capability to infiltrate additional sizeable units composed of ethnic types, practically indistiguishable from similar tribesmen of Lao nationality, and therefore without incurring too much risk of providing proof of DRV intervention.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–359. Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC and Seoul and repeated to Bangkok, Canberra, Colombo, Hong Kong, Karachi, Kuala Lumpur, London, Manila, New Delhi, Ottawa, Phnom Penh, Paris, Rangoon, Saigon, Singapore, Taipei, Tokyo, and Wellington. Received at 9:44 p.m.

[2] In telegram 496, September 1, the Embassy passed to the Department a brief report that the Army Attaché received while in Sam Neua on September 1. This intelligence indicated that all four Lao army posts on the Nam Ma River of Sam Neua Province fell on August 30. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–159; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Not found.

3. Thus without any overt abrupt change from present tactics, enemy can soon be in control of sizeable areas Laos cut off from RLG administration. As soon as enough Sam Neua province falls, assume next step would be set up rival "Lao Government" such areas by unjailed NLHX leaders to call on ChiComs or DRV for various kinds support and thus improve propaganda basis by attempting "legalize" intervention, and provide legal sounding group for Communist bloc to support in effort establish de facto return status similar that preceding October 1957.

4. Once this stage reached, in addition harmful psychological effects on RLG and populace as well other governments and peoples SEA and FE, problem reversion to status quo would be infinitely more difficult and expensive operation.

5. Loss of Sam Neua province might not automatically mark loss of major portion FAL mobile striking force. Nevertheless retreat over roadless mountainous terrain by then already occupied or strongly infiltrated by PL units, would presumably not be easy. Problem of emergency evacuation defending forces at Sam Neua airport and of supplying remaining FAL guerrilla operations roaming poor country populated largely by hostile villages, should flag significant possibility that Sam Neua theater may soon present second Dien Bien Phu tragedy, if tide not held. Continued battle for rest of Laos would automatically require foreign troop assistance, better given before than after disaster.

6. Therefore obvious time to attempt halt further outside aggression against RLG is now, and this only possible by forcing decision to halt on Communist leadership outside Laos.

Recommendations:

1. Most urgent consideration should be given to immediate issuance by US Government of warning that by permitting continued incursions of hostile elements into Laos DRV creating a situation which may force a major change in nature and magnitude US aid to Laos. Aspects such as who should issue warning, language to be employed, et cetera, need careful study but it should be made publicly in formal statement. However implemented, I believe (with full agreement country team), that such warning now needs be issued at earliest possible moment. It might be along following lines:

"The United States Government has repeatedly announced that it strongly supports the determination of the Royal Lao Government to resist Communist efforts to undermine the security and stability of Laos.

"The United States announced on August 26 that it would continue to support reasonable approaches to achieve a peaceful solution to the current situation in Laos but that the Communist bloc have posed their threat to Laos in terms that require adequate military and police countermeasures if that nation's sovereignty is to be preserved.

"Nevertheless, on August 30 another major attack was launched from across the border of North Vietnam against the small Royal Lao army which had finally gathered enough reinforcements to start pushing back the earlier enemy salient which had extended from the North Vietnam border 50 miles into western Sam Neua province. Any further augmentation of the invading force or continued material support thereof will require a major change in the nature and magnitude of the Royal Lao Government's need for support to resist Communist efforts to undermine the security and stability of Laos. By permitting continued incursions of hostile elements from its territory into Laos the DRV is creating a situation that may force a drastic revision of the heretofore limited nature and scope of United States military aid to Laos."

2. In a rapidly deteriorating situation, the nature of US actions to [support?] the RLG should be determined both in the light of their immediate deterrent effect upon the DRV and of the extent to which those actions would be likely to command the support or at least acquiescence of our allies.

US action to support RLG whether announced in advance or not, might consist dispatch US military units to guard capitals of Luang Prabang and Vientiane and to Savannakhet in order relieve FAL battalions to engage in fighting interventionists. In addition US planes might be made available transport FAL units from rear to forward areas and carry out logistical support operations. Medical corps assistance, including helicopters, also appears advisable first-stage possibility.

3. (A) Simultaneously with public announcement suggested above recommend we inquire most urgently of French Government what forces it prepared to send. Department will recall Admiral Ortoli mentioned possibility immediate dispatch at least one crack French combat battalion to Laos as regular garrison to support FAL at Seno (Embtels 64 paragraph 3 and 70),[4] or what support it prepared to give Laos in time to meet this overwhelming threat if RLG requests immediate assistance from France or SEATO or UN pointing out that while Prime Minister Phoui has expressed to me determination to meet the crisis with additional US monetary support already requested, the US Government anticipates that nothing but strongest international action will prevent Communists from taking over Laos and that we believe RLG bound to recognize this within a few days.

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[4] Telegram 64, dated July 10. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/7–1059) In telegram 70, July 10, Smith gave an optimistic appraisal of the future of French-Lao-U.S. relations based on discussions with French special representative Admiral Ortoli and Phoui. (*Ibid.*) Both telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

I believe we should indicate to French what we are prepared to do under paragraph 2 above if asked by RLG.

(B) Make same inquiry of British and inform them of our approach to French and what we are prepared to do if asked. Consult with them on possible immediate concurrent moves in unilateral military action, SEATO or UN action and in public announcements or diplomatic representation.

(C) Advise RLG of possibilities of actual US troop support if requested and still considered necessary by US.

4. Study and additional consultations should be begun soonest with view of ascertaining, how if at all, proposed course of action can be tied into SEATO framework. Embassy views in separate telegram.

5. Similarly, study and additional consultations should be begun soonest for aiding in development and support for possible RLG appeal to SC and GA action in UN.[5] This also subject separate telegram.

Conclusion:

Obviously decision to issue warning and be prepared act if it disregarded one of immense gravity and responsibility. In submitting above recommendations, I am impelled deepest personal conviction that unless we draw line now, we will have to draw it later when Laos may be partially or wholly lost along with entire US position and prestige in SE Asia if not all Far East. Like Quemoy or Berlin, I think the time is now come when we have to take our stand.

Smith

[5] In telegram 535 from Vientiane, September 4, Smith reported that the Lao Government was appealing to the United Nations for an "emergency force" under Article 1 of the U.N. Charter as well as similar assistance from SEATO. When Smith expressed surprise at the suddenness of the appeal and lack of consultation, Foreign Minister Kamphan Panya confided that these appeals were merely covers for a request to the United States, the most obvious and likely source for help. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

254. Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (McElroy)[1]

JCSM–374–59 *Washington, September 4, 1959.*

SUBJECT

Laos (U)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are gravely concerned over the serious problem posed by the increasingly strong Communist invasion of Laos. The telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in Laos and the telegram from the U.S. Embassy, Saigon,[2] add to this concern.

2. Information in the hands of the Joint Chiefs of Staff convince them that this present serious situation results from strong outside support of reorganized dissident Pathet Lao units. There is increasing evidence also of the probable active participation of Viet Minh military units.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that while measures taken and contemplated will assist the Laotians, these measures are not sufficient in themselves to ensure that Laotian military forces can successfully defend northern Laos or in fact be able to defend Southern Laos.

4. The situation has now developed to the point where the Communist incursions can only be arrested, and the territorial integrity and the existence of the Laotian Government be ensured by effective action taken by the United States as a matter of urgency. Such actions could, and probably would, lead to active U.S. military intervention, particularly if there is any appreciable delay in implementation. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that an increase in U.S. support as evidenced by the above will require a departure from our present U.S. policy with respect to Laos.

5. The U.S. position, with respect to the Geneva Accords, and the newly negotiated agreements with France with regard to the training missions for the Laotian forces, while satisfactory for the situation that existed prior to the present incursion into Laos, need to be modified. For example, it is becoming increasingly difficult to hide the presence

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 381 Laos. Secret. A note on the source text reads: "noted by Mr. Knight."

[2] According to notes on a draft of this memorandum in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/9–1059, the references are to telegram 518 from Vientiane, *supra*, and telegram 632 from Saigon, August 27, in which the Embassy in Saigon reported a claim by Diem that there were 3,000 Pathet Lao under arms in Laos and 5,000 effectives in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam along the Lao border. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2759; included in the microfiche supplement)

of U.S. military personnel in Laos even though they are in civilian clothes, and their effectiveness as augmentation to the French training personnel is greatly reduced by their apparent status as civilians.

6. The South East Asia Treaty Organization provides a legal basis for U.S. actions in the defense of Laos, since that country is one of the Protocol Nations to the Treaty.

7. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree in general with the recommendations of the U.S. Ambassador to Laos as presented in his Cable No. 518, dated 3 September 1959. They feel, however, that the United States must take additional action if it is to provide timely assistance to the Royal Laotian Government and prevent the loss to communism of the entire country, with the inevitable loss in prestige of the U.S. position in Southeast Asia if not in all of the Far East.

8. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that U.S. actions be undertaken as follows:

a. As a matter of urgency, recast the policy toward Laos to free the United States from all restrictions on its actions in Laos, whether taken unilaterally or in conjunction with Allies.

b. Authorize an augmentation of the U.S. training and support personnel in Laos to the extent necessary to ensure more effective training of those forces; and the positive U.S. direction and control of the forces. This could be patterned upon the system used in Korea.

c. Establish a MAAG in Laos with U.S. personnel in uniform.

d. Direct CINCPAC to alert his forces at once and be prepared to implement plans for the defense of Laos.

e. Initiate at once diplomatic actions that will provide outside military assistance to Laos, and at the same time determine what military support can be provided by the other Asiatic Allies of the United States outside SEATO.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
N. F. Twining[3]
Chairman,
Joint Chiefs of Staff

[3] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

255. Editorial Note

At the morning Staff Meeting of Acting Secretary of State Robert Murphy, September 4, the situation in Laos was discussed as follows:

"Mr. Parsons said that press tickers this morning reported that the Lao Ambassador in London had publicly said that Laos has asked the UN to send troops to Laos. He said there was no confirmation of this from Vientiane or USUN. (Subsequently the text of the Lao appeal to the UN was received in the Department.) Mr. Parsons said that Ambassador Smith had recommended sending troops and issuing a serious warning about US intentions. Mr. Parsons said that a general comprehension is developing that the Communist aggression in Laos is more serious than had heretofore been assumed and that we have not done enough to stop it. Mr. Murphy suggested that a preliminary intra-Departmental meeting be held immediately and that later in the day a meeting be held with Defense and other interested agencies. Mr. Murphy said that one basic difficulty is that we still lack facts about the situation. For example, is Ambassador Smith right that another attack by the Communist forces will bring an end to organized Lao military strength. Mr. Parsons said that he felt the way to stop the Communist advance was to convince Moscow and Peiping that we will resist. Mr. Murphy said that in the last analysis the whole burden would fall on the US and that long lines of communication and the interior position of Laos would make military action extremely difficult. Mr. Parsons said that he could foresee three alternative lines to follow: (1) a public warning (2) resort to the UN (3) an approach to Khrushchev to tell him that we are committed to the defense of Laos and will have to live up to our commitment. Of the three he felt that the last would be most productive. Mr. Murphy said that various possibilities could be discussed in the meetings he had suggested." (Notes by Thomas McElhiney of S/S; Department of State, Secretary of State's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

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256. Memorandum From the Secretary's of State's Special Assistant (Scranton) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, September 4, 1959.

SUBJECT

Re Meeting on the Laos Situation in Mr. Murphy's Office this morning[2]

First discussed were the United States' obligations to Laos:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459. Secret.

[2] This meeting followed immediately the one described *supra*.

1. The United States first gave assistance to the Government of Laos in January 1955, as a result of a policy decision.

2. On several occasions United States Governmental officials had made unilateral statements indicating the United States would support any government in Laos which fosters its own independence.

3. Since January 1955 the United States has persuaded the Lao Government to take several courses of action and even quietly has helped to choose its leaders, etc.

4. There are no bilateral obligations in writing.

5. As a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, the United States is obligated to protect Laos from and come to its assistance in the event of aggression by means of armed attack.

The present situation:

1. While it is surmised that at least the Government of Viet Minh [*North Vietnam*] and probably Communist China are involved in present action in Northern Laos, there is no tangible evidence yet available to this effect; in fact the intelligence reports from the area are very skimpy.

2. The Government of Laos has appealed to the United Nations requesting "an emergency force" to assist it against the rebellious elements.[3]

3. Further, the Government of Laos has drafted a message to SEATO requesting assistance against aggression from the DRV.

Ambassador Smith's recommendation for a public warning and FE's suggestion of approaching Khrushchev were then discussed with general opposition to the latter and the suggestion that the former be held in abeyance temporarily until other agreed-upon actions were taken.

Suggestions made at this meeting to be further considered in a meeting with Mr. Dillon to follow,[4] were as follows:

1. Consultation with the British and French representatives in Washington.

2. Meeting of the SEATO Council of Representatives.

3. United States military build-up in the Pacific with purposeful leak thereof.

4. As for the United Nations request made by the Government of Laos, it was suggested that the United States consult with the Secretariat as well as the British and French representatives here in Washington as indicated in suggestion #1.

WWS

[3] For text of the Lao note to U.N. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, September 4, see *American Foreign Policy: Current Documents, 1959*, p. 1228.

[4] See *infra*.

257. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, September 4, 1959, 4:30 p.m.[1]

SUBJECT

Department of State–CIA–Department of Defense–Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting on Laos, 4:30 p.m., September 4, 1959

PARTICIPANTS

The Acting Secretary
S—Mr. Scranton
U—Mr. Brewster
M—Mr. Murphy
M—Mr. Isham
NEA—Mr. Jones
NEA—Mr. Ludlow
IO—Mr. Wilcox
UNP—Mr. Sisco
FE—Mr. Parsons
FE—Mr. Green
FE—Mr. Jenkins
FE (SEATO)—Mr. Emmons
SEA—Mr. Anderson
SEA—Mr. Chapman
SEA—Mr. Askew
H—Mr. Macomber
INR—Mr. Cumming
INR—Mr. Armstrong

OSD/ISA
Mr. Knight
Adm. O'Donnell
Col. Bingham

JCS
Admiral Burke
Col. Rowney
Col. Butler
Cdr. Busik
Lt. Inman

CIA
Gen. Cabell
[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]

Mr. Murphy opened the meeting by saying he thought it advisable for those assembled to agree on certain lines of action with respect to the deteriorating situation in Laos. He said there was to be a meeting at six of the SEATO ambassadors in Washington[2] to acquaint them

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459. Top Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Jenkins and Askew.

[2] Memorandum of a meeting, September 4, 6 p.m. (*Ibid.*, included in the microfiche supplement) See also Documents 39 and 40.

with the situation in Laos and to stimulate a Thai request for an emergency meeting of SEATO with the thought that SEATO might send a team or teams of fact-finders to Laos. We hoped for some publicity with respect to SEATO action for impact on public opinion and especially on area opinion. The Australians particularly seemed apathetic in regard to SEATO action, and clearly indicated that they preferred UN action. The UK attitude was similar, as was presumably that of New Zealand.[3] The thought was that SEATO fact-finders could be sent without conflicting with UN action. If SEATO was to be more than a paper tiger, it must show activity. It was not clear whether the Lao had yet made an appeal to SEATO.

Mr. Parsons said that a cable had been sent in an attempt to forestall the Lao appeal to SEATO.[4] The Lao had, however, seen fit to appeal to the UN today without consultation with the U.S., the UK, or France. We felt that at the present a satisfactory presentation of the Lao appeal could not be made to the Security Council because we did not have hard facts on Vietminh participation in the fighting.

Mr. Wilcox said that Cordier had telephoned the SYG in Sao Paulo. The SYG hopes to return on Saturday, September 5. He probably will want to call a meeting of the Security Council under his own authority. He is sensitive about criticism in the press that he left New York in a time of crisis.

Mr. Murphy observed that a recent message had reported the Lao foreign minister as frankly saying that Lao appeals to the UN and to SEATO would be used as a cover for the real Lao objective of requesting U.S. intervention.[5] Before this remark, there was some discussion of physical proof of Vietnamese intervention with a statement by Mr. Murphy that no information had been received sufficient to make a clear case for the Lao contention. He therefore felt that the Lao appeal to the UN may be premature but that we must do the best we can. He indicated his preference for an Asian-inspired SEATO approach which would be more in line with our policy of using regional organizations where possible; in this context he referred to the Guatemala situation.

(At this point the Acting Secretary came in.)

Mr. Murphy noted that Ambassador Smith at Vientiane had recommended that the U.S. dispatch troops to guard the centers of government in Laos, planes for transporting the Lao armed forces, and medical facilities and personnel with helicopters.[6] Mr. Murphy mentioned that this is the first recommendation for U.S. military intervention of this type.

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[3] Presumably reported in telegram 313 from USUN, September 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459)

[4] Document 252.

[5] See footnote 5, Document 253.

[6] Document 253.

Mr. Dillon said that the President preferred not to return on Sunday and was now scheduled to return Tuesday morning.[7]

Mr. Dillon said it was important to keep Congressional leaders informed. They were greatly interested in the situation.

Mr. Wilcox said he believed UN observers would be preferable to SEATO observers because the latter would not carry as much weight in New York as the former. Mr. Dillon said it was important to have SEATO observers, or rather fact-finders, in that they could stimulate SEATO interest and action through their findings. He saw no conflict between SEATO and UN action of this sort. It was partly a question of SEATO's being able to act quicker.

Mr. Murphy questioned whether there could be early UN action even if the Security Council met on Sunday in view of the likely Soviet veto. Mr. Sisco said IO thought they had a formula whereby the Soviet veto could be overridden. He said that under Article 29 of the Charter a subsidiary organ of the Security Council could be created which would not be subject to the veto. Mr. Sisco said that if the military situation were really serious then SEATO should act, but if it is a question of observers, he felt the UN could act as rapidly as SEATO and have more world opinion support. Mr. Sisco then explained the mechanics of creating the subsidiary organ under Article 29, where the veto does not apply.

Mr. Murphy said we should be careful to call the SEATO team "fact-finders" and to steer away from the term "observers." He thought the combined impact of UN observers and SEATO fact-finders might be useful.

Admiral Burke expressed the opinion that the Lao military situation may deteriorate very rapidly and questioned whether SEATO would be ready to act quickly with armed forces. Mr. Murphy then referred to the forthcoming emergency meeting of SEATO Council representatives, but did not know how far SEATO would be prepared to go. Admiral Burke reiterated his belief that someone may have to move in fast. The Thai, he continued, might be the best candidates for this action.

Mr. Murphy observed that if outside forces were put in now, the red Chinese or at least North Vietnam would probably enter Laos in force. Timing was important.

Mr. Green asked whether CINCPAC could not be authorized to take certain moves now. Admiral Burke replied that CINCPAC had as yet taken no action, but in a reply to a question from Mr. Murphy, stated that CINCPAC could put into effect its Operations Plan within four days. Mr. Green stated there might be some advantage in certain

[7] Eisenhower was vacationing in Scotland after completion of his trip to Bonn, London, and Paris.

limited moves on the part of CINCPAC, and Admiral Burke agreed. In reply to a question from Mr. Dillon, Admiral Burke suggested such moves should consist of: 1) Augmentation of U.S. training operations in Laos; 2) establishment of a regular MAAG in Laos; and 3) assembling forces and transport facilities in Okinawa in readiness to move rapidly. The fleet was already on the alert, but had not moved yet. Elements of the Seventh Fleet could be sent to the South China Sea. It was observed that the airfield at Seno was barely able to take C–130's. Mr. Murphy observed that some of these moves on the part of CINCPAC might be advantageous, and Mr. Dillon agreed but believed the moves should not be too strong and should not include actual loading of troops.

Mr. Wilcox thought that if we rattled sabres now it might adversely affect UN opinion just when the Security Council was considering the situation. Mr. Murphy acknowledged this, but said that some were not taking this situation seriously and some overt preparations would seem to be in order.

Admiral Burke said that most C–130's were in Japan but some were in Okinawa. He cautioned that if our own troops were sent to Laos, they would have to have large-scale logistical support fast. This would mean a great many drops, and it is a long way to Laos. The only thing our troops could do initially would be to hold the major government centers and let the Lao troops move out. SEATO and U.S. plans contemplate first holding the seats of government and then moving out. They do not at present contemplate holding Sam Neua, but if forces arrived in time they could, of course, go there.

Mr. Parsons cautioned that if Sam Neua is allowed to fall we would be back to the business of having two governments in Laos—one of them Communist.

Mr. Murphy raised the question of what we could do in Vietnam. Ambassador Durbrow had thrown cold water on the idea of using South Vietnam troops under circumstances existing a few days ago.[8] Mr. Parsons mentioned that the intervention of GVN forces in Laos would be a most incendiary step, and the role of the GVN should be treated with much greater caution than that of the Thai government. Mr. Green then said that short of sending South Vietnamese troops

[8] In telegram 711 from Saigon, September 3, Ambassador Durbrow reported a conversation among himself, MAAG Chief Williams, and President Diem in which Diem showed the two Americans a formal request from Defense Minister Phoumi for South Vietnamese troop intervention and matériel support in Laos. Durbrow and Williams discouraged Diem from providing assistance. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–359; included in the microfiche supplement) The Department of State concurred with Durbrow's and Williams' discouragement of South Vietnamese assistance to Laos. (Telegram 435 to Saigon, September 3; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–359)

into Laos the GVN might conduct amphibious exercises in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese are particularly sensitive about the vulnerability of their coast.

(A briefing on the military situation in Laos was given at this point, in which it was pointed out that a co-ordinated attack on four Lao posts had caused them to fall within six hours. The Lao said at the time that there were five enemy battalions involved, but our army attaché thought there were but three, which would mean some 1500 men. As of September 3 there were two columns moving on Sam Neua. This briefing was based primarily on US ARMA Vientiane reports CX 173 and 174.)[9]

Doubt was expressed as to whether the Lao could handle the situation if any more enemy troops were introduced. It was reported that the Lao were airlifting two battalions to Sam Neua, but there was a real question as to whether they could hold the city. General Cabell then stated that in the event of P-L assault and if the FAL succeeds in moving more personnel into the area as now proposed, it would mean the commitment of about 50% of the effective strength of FAL, leaving the rest of the country with extremely thin military cover. Mr. Murphy then referred to the absence of prisoners and other evidence of North Vietnam intervention and stated that such an assault should at least produce some hard evidence to support the Lao case. Admiral Burke, however, felt that if the FAL were defeated in Sam Neua there might very well be no opportunity to obtain further evidence.

In response to a question, [*1 line of source text not declassified*] but they had seven Lao radio teams, one in one of the towns overrun.

General Cabell observed the great lengths to which the Communists have gone to hide their intervention. Admiral Burke said that even if there were no Vietminh intervention, it might be that Laos could still be lost through pro-Communist insurgency. Mr. Murphy said if it were really a civil war it would be quite different from the way we are looking at it. General Cabell said the results, however, might be the same. Mr. Dillon said that SEATO can act in case of Communist subversion, which is another point in favor of considering SEATO.

Mr. Knight then asked how fast we could expect SEATO to move in the fact-finders, and Mr. Murphy said he thought it would be possible for SEATO fact-finders from Thailand to arrive on the scene within twenty-four hours. Mr. Dillon asserted that the main thing to do is to get a clear assessment of the situation and to bring the Australians, British, and others into agreement to take action.

[9] Neither found, but see footnote 2, Document 253.

General Cabell observed that morale in Laos was low and that the Lao seemed to be on the verge of panic. Now that they had appealed to the UN it was important that there be early visible action in order to prevent a collapse of Lao resistance.

Admiral Burke asked whether there was anything we could do to get away from the restrictions against uniforms for U.S. personnel in Laos. Mr. Parsons felt that if we did it would simply confirm the case the other side would be making in the UN. Mr. Knight in response to a question from Mr. Murphy said that the need to wear civilian clothes was a handicap in the training responsibilities.

It was noted that 28 additional personnel were being sent out to help in communications. Eighteen Seabees were also being sent, and the Seabees who have been there on TDY will be returning.

Admiral Burke observed that it was possible we might have to move over the weekend. It may be a question of CINCPAC having to execute its plan or witnessing the fall of Laos. He said the JCS and Defense would like to bring C–130's to the loading fields, to load transports, and to move ships down. Nothing would be said publicly about these moves being connected with Laos. Mr. Dillon asked that these plans be put on paper so that we could have a look at them and approve them. (Such a paper was later received and approved in State.[10] A Niact telegram was sent to the President requesting his approval of the proposed actions.)[11]

Mr. Knight mentioned the problem of money. Actions taken or already contemplated would cost about $8,000,000. Mr. Murphy said we had thought it was $4,000,000 plus $1,000,000 allocated to CINCPAC.

Colonel Bingham stated that the augmentation program for the FAL and Auto-Defense was originally estimated at 3.8 million dollars, but that the $8,000,000 figure included other contemplated emergency actions.

Mr. Knight thought that in order to take the actions we needed to take now we should have available around $10,000,000. Mr. Dillon said he could not guarantee that the MAP could all come out of the contingency fund. He said, however, that we are faced with one of those situations where one must go ahead and do what must be done and then find the funding means.

Mr. Wilcox said that IO had just heard from New York that the SYG would call a meeting of the Security Council for Sunday or Monday, whichever we desired.[12] It was agreed we would prefer

[10] The paper was in the form of a memorandum from Burke to Irwin, September 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459)

[11] *Infra.*

[12] Reported in telegram 315 from USUN, September 4. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–459)

Monday at 3 p.m. Mr. Sisco said the British felt we should be talking with the Russians about the UN action. Mr. Murphy said it would be preferable for the British to talk with the Russians. They could better get across the idea that the Americans were agitated. Mr. Wilcox said that mention might be made of the Khrushchev visit. Mr. Dillon thought the level was important; it probably should not be done in New York.

Mr. Knight wondered whether the time had not come for us to release our people from some of the restrictions agreed upon in Paris concerning the training program. Mr. Parsons said particularly if we gain concrete indication of foreign intervention in Laos we might well take another look at this and talk with the French Embassy about it.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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258. Telegram From the Acting Secretary of State to the President, at Prestwick, Scotland[1]

Washington, September 5, 1959—12:01 a.m.

For delivery to the President 0800 GMT September 5. Developments re Laos.

At meeting this afternoon with CIA, Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff[2] we all took grave view of recent developments Laos and saw need for prompt action within next few days. Summary of our conclusions follows.

A. Present Situation.

1. Military. Pathet Lao rebels with probable North Vietnamese support pushing forward from positions captured earlier this week along northeast frontier Sam Neua Province toward Sam Neua town. Prospects are that if Pathet Lao operation continued at present and possibly increased level, Sam Neua town may fall within next few days and 50 percent of Lao armed forces, now being concentrated Sam Neua, may be lost. This in turn may result in re-establishment Pathet Lao puppet government with international Communist support.

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary's Records, Laos. Top Secret. There is no number on the source text, but a note on the Department of State copy indicates that this message was cited as DTG 050501Z. This copy also indicates that the telegram was drafted by Jenkins and Askew, cleared with FE and IO, and approved by Dillon. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559)

[2] See *supra*.

2. RLG Appeals. Without obtaining, US, UK or French advice Royal Lao Govt (RLG) today[3] appealed to UN for UN troops to counter foreign aggression. RLG planned make similar appeal to SEATO (which we have sought to stop for present) and may subsequently make appeal to us for direct military intervention.

3. Lao Morale. Believe morale shaky and susceptible disintegration under enemy pressure without evidence friendly outside support. It therefore essential that we take and encourage our friends to take immediate and effective action on RLG appeals for aid.

4. Foreign Reaction. So far reaction of SEATO members and other interested non-Communist nations not consonant with gravity of situation.

B. Security Council Meeting.

UN Secretary-General has called meeting of Security Council on Laos for 3:00 PM Monday, September 7. We are initiating consultations with the UK, France, Italy and Secretary-General, with view to having Security Council send a three-nation fact-finding mission to Laos under procedure which shall not be subject to Soviet veto.

C. Meeting with Representatives of SEATO Powers.

At 6 PM today I met with representatives other seven SEATO members[4] to alert them and their governments to increasing seriousness of military situation and to stimulate their thinking on possible SEATO courses of action. Pointed out if Sam Neua fell, and if RLG forces there are overrun, situation could become critical. Stated our preference UN be allowed operate before SEATO act, but Lao may at any time call on SEATO and perhaps even appeal directly to us. Stated re latter that our general policy was action through regional organizations preferable to US unilateral action. Suggested as first step SEATO might send fact finders to Laos in order obtain joint appreciation of actual situation. I said SEATO fact finders would not necessarily conflict with UN observers if latter also sent, reiterating importance SEATO having facts in case it is called on to act quickly. It was also agreed we would meet at 11 AM September 7[5] by which time hopefully views of respective governments would have been received. Department issued press statement agreed to at meeting merely stating Lao situation reviewed.

[3] The Lao appeal to the United Nations was on September 4, This telegram was drafted on the evening of September 4.

[4] See footnote 2, *supra.*

[5] Memorandum of conversation, September 7. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–759; included in the microfiche supplement)

D. U.S. Military Preparations.

Defense and JCS consider that it possible that military situation may deteriorate rapidly over next few days. They feel that US military action may be required if Laos is to be saved for free world. If such action decided upon Defense feels it must be in position move very rapidly. Therefore in order back up present diplomatic action and to get into position to move rapidly if this should be necessary Defense desires instruct CINCPAC to alert his forces and take necessary steps to be ready to execute promptly his operation plan if a political decision is made which would require such. Also desires that CINCPAC be authorized:

1. Bring transport aircraft to outloading airfields ready for embarkation of US troops;
2. Load those forces which are to be embarked in amphibious lift in Okinawa; and
3. Sail elements of Seventh Fleet to South China Sea remaining out of sight of land. If queried by newsmen CINCPAC will state his forces conducting routine exercises and will not make further comment.

I am concerned that Communists may be conducting another serious probe of our fortitude and may seriously underrate our will to respect our SEATO obligations. Therefore I feel action desired by Defense would be helpful background to UN action which should be our first hope. Accordingly recommend your urgent approval of above recommendations of Defense.[6]

E. Trilateral Consultations With British and French.

Under Secretary Murphy will undertake formal consultations re Lao situation with British and French here on September 5.[7] I understand British believe we should discuss facts of situation with Soviets. We propose suggest British take this step themselves citing active US concern over developments Laos.

F. Congressional Briefing.

We plan keep Congressional leaders informed of developments. Senate Foreign Relations Committee scheduled briefing on Laos September 8.

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[6] According to telegram PRESWHO9, 0051030Z, from Scotland, September 5, Eisenhower approved the actions and preparations specifically endorsing those in section D. The President wanted no public announcement of the preparation and commented that if action was to be taken, it should be done "with great swiftness" before "the physical situation in Laos has gone against the West." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

[7] Memorandum of conversation, September 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

259. Memorandum From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Cumming) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, September 5, 1959.

SUBJECT

Communist Reaction to US Military Intervention in Laos

Dispatching US troops to help the RLG, whether under US, SEATO or UN auspices, would probably lead to a marked augmentation of North Vietnamese participation in the Pathet Lao insurrection. Hanoi and Peiping—and to a lesser extent Moscow—have deeply committed their prestige in the Laos situation, and both the North Vietnamese and the Chinese Communists have warned several times that any foreign military intervention in Laos would be considered as a "direct threat" to their national security. Hanoi and Peiping have a large vested interest in protecting the communist apparatus in Laos, which probably figures prominently in the Communist bloc's plans for further subversion of other Southeast Asian countries. The Chinese Communists would probably be concerned by the reaction of other Asian nations if such a US move were not counteracted.

There would of course be a spate of propaganda statements and diplomatic moves by the communists, possibly including an attempt to recovene the 1954 Geneva Conference or to obtain UN condemnation of US "aggression." The communists, however, would expect that such moves would not in themselves be sufficient.

Depending partly on the nature of the US military move, the communist military reaction initially would probably take the form of further covert Hanoi intervention rather than overt invasion, although there might be less effort than at present to camouflage this intervention. If such action were sufficient to prevent the RLG/US measures from destroying communist strength in Laos, the communists would probably be prepared for a protracted indecisive struggle, hoping that eventually the RLG/US position would become less tenable both within Laos and internationally.

If US military moves in Laos were sufficiently effective as to pose a relatively immediate threat to communist assets in Laos, the communist bloc would face the difficult decision of whether or not openly to commit North Vietnamese or Chinese Communists troops to the fighting in Laos. The communists would be unlikely to take such a step if

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559. Secret. This memorandum was originally to go to Parsons, but Cumming changed the addressee by hand. A handwritten note on the source text indicates that Dillon saw this memorandum on September 5.

they calculated that the fighting would be likely to spread into North Vietnam or Communist China or that the prospects of some fairly immediate military success were small. Moreover, Moscow would be reluctant to give its blessing to overt military action by Peiping if it felt that this would seriously risk Soviet involvement in the hostilities. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders might not regard such risk in this situation as prohibitive, as they have recently shown increased confidence in the USSR's ability to deter military action by the US. Since the communists would be most reluctant to allow this setback to their strength and prestige, the possibility cannot be excluded that they would estimate that a quick massive intervention would make it difficult for the US to dislodge them from Laos or those portions of the country which they would then control.

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260. Telegram From the Acting Secretary of State to the President, at Prestwick, Scotland[1]

Washington, September 6, 1959—8:30 p.m.

Developments re Laos.

Following is a summary of developments in the Laos situation since reftel: DTG 050501Z.[2]

A. Situation in Laos

There has been no significant change in the situation within Laos over past two days. Pathet Lao rebel forces in northeast Sam Neua province have concentrated and are advancing toward Sam Neua town in three columns, nearest of which is about 15 airline miles distant. Although there has been some contact between Royal Lao Armed Forces and enemy, no major engagements have as yet taken place.

Royal Lao Government remains determined to defend country and morale in Sam Neua town appears satisfactory despite shortages of food and clothing caused by influx of refugees from north. Lao government has formulated plans to strengthen civil authority

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–659. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Askew; cleared with FE, IO, and SEA; and approved by Dillon. Passed to the Department of Defense exclusive for McElroy, Irwin, Knight, and Burke.

[2] Document 258.

throughout country as move to reassure population and organize more effective counteraction to Pathet Lao military and psychological offensive.

There still is no irrefutable physical evidence of direct foreign (i.e. North Vietnamese) intervention available to us; however, additional details on Pathet Lao military operations strengthen presumption of North Vietnamese direction, support and probable participation.

B. US Military Preparations

Pursuant to your authorization[3] and pursuant to an existing Pacific Command contingency plan to ensure friendly control of Laos in the face of a communist insurgency, the following military actions have been taken:

1. Headquarters of a Joint Task Force under Marine command has been activated at Iwakuni, Japan. The planned Joint Task Force comprises essentially one Marine regimental landing team from Marine forces currently stationed in Okinawa; one composite Marine Air Group from the Marine Air Wing in Japan; and certain supporting Army and Air Force elements. The mission of these forces if employed will be: (a) to secure the airfield facilities at Vientiane and Seno, and key river crossings in the vicinity; (b) to free Laotian military forces to deal with the insurgency; and (c) to conduct such further operations as may be necessary to ensure friendly control of Laos. Two battalion landing teams of this regiment are prepared in Okinawa to board transport aircraft that are being held available in Japan for this purpose on a one hour alert. The third battalion has been ordered onto amphibious shipping and is being held at Okinawa. The helicopter carrier *Thetis Bay* has been loaded in Japan with helicopters and related equipment and is proceeding to Okinawa to be held there also pending further instructions.

2. Elements of the 7th Fleet are prepared to provide support to the operation as necessary: (a) One carrier task group (*Lexington*) is now operating in the South China Sea; (b) A second carrier task group (*Shangri La*) is off Taiwan; (c) A third carrier task group (*Hancock*) will arrive in the Philippine area early next week.

3. Any queries about the movements will be answered with the statement that the forces are to take part in a routine training exercise in the Okinawa area.

C. Department's Press Statement

Department issued press statement on Laos September 5[4] (copy of which already forwarded you) with intent of clearly demonstrating serious view US takes of situation in Laos and US determination to support Lao Government. Occasion taken to review and emphasize

[3] See footnote 6, Document 258.

[4] Text of the statement, Press Release No. 636, September 5, is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, September 21, 1959, p. 414.

strong circumstantial evidence of outside Communist direction and support of Pathet Lao actions. Statement received heavy play in Sunday newspapers.

D. Situation at United Nations

The UN Secretary-General has called meeting of Security Council on Laos for 3:00 P.M. Monday.[5] Our consultations with other friendly Security Council members and the Secretary-General indicates preliminary favorable response to our proposal that Security Council send a three-nation, fact-finding mission to Laos under a procedure which would not be subject to Soviet veto. Consultations are continuing.[6]

E. SEATO Developments

Meeting of SEATO Council Representatives at Bangkok September 2[7] revealed that most members had not taken serious view developments in Laos. (However at that time SEATO governments had not had time to appraise August 30 attacks which opened present phase Laos crisis.) French disparaged US presentation of threatening military situation and expressed belief SEATO should take no action while UN moves underway. US representative agreed all available UN resources should be utilized and that recourse to SEATO military intervention should be considered as last resort, but emphasized SEATO must become alert now to possibility it may be put to crucial test. UK generally agreed SEATO must anticipate breakdown Lao Government. SEATO Secretary General Pote Sarasin (Thailand) felt it time to take firm stand which might serve as deterrent to the Communists. Next meeting of SEATO Council at Bangkok planned for September 15 or earlier. Meanwhile, we have succeeded in persuading Lao Government to delay its appeal to SEATO for assistance. We hope to stimulate SEATO toward making preparations 1) to ascertain facts of situation in Laos and 2) to act rapidly on possible subsequent appeal from Laos for military support.

F. Consultations with British and French

Under Secretary Murphy held trilateral consultations on Laos with British and French September 5[8] as planned. They were informed that CINCPAC is taking certain steps to prepare US forces and ready operational plans but that no actions would be taken before essential political decisions had been made. They were also advised that Lao

[5] September 7.

[6] Summarized in circular telegram 231, September 6. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–659; included in the microfiche supplement)

[7] See Documents 38 ff.

[8] Memorandum of conversation, September 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

Government has deferred its planned appeal to SEATO. Both French and British favored trying find solution through UN before invoking SEATO. French furthermore expressed concern at possibility that SEATO actions would include dispatching troops and emphasized belief Communists can raise stakes faster in the area than can we. Murphy assured French that for time being SEATO consideration of situation would be limited to subject of sending SEATO fact-finders, not troops, to Laos, and expressed opinion SEATO consideration of matter would not muddy waters if underway at same time UN studying matter. Murphy also expressed our concern that complete non-action by SEATO on a matter of intimate concern to it could vitiate organization.

G. Comments

In general I believe we are somewhat ahead of our major allies in this situation. French in particular seem to take less serious view of developments in Laos and to be especially fearful of any free world reaction that might provoke increased Communist intervention. British appear to be somewhat closer to our position but evidently also are staking hopes on tranquilization of situation via UN. I hope in our continuing consultations with our allies to develop greater identity of views. While also of belief we should push for UN action first as described above, I continue to believe we cannot place our entire reliance on UN, since the military situation could deteriorate rapidly.

Dillon

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261. Editorial Note

At the request of the Royal Government of Laos, Secretary-General Hammarskjöld asked the President of the Security Council to convene the Council to consider the situation in Laos. The Security Council agreed on September 7, by a vote of 10 to 1 (USSR), to include the item on its agenda. The U.S. Representative then introduced a draft resolution sponsored jointly by France, the United Kingdom, and the United States to appoint a factfinding subcommittee of representatives of Argentina, Italy, Japan, and Tunisia whose task it was to examine the situation in Laos and report back to the Council. By a vote of 10 to 1 (USSR), the Security Council ruled that the draft resolution

was of a procedural nature and was not subject to veto. This finding was supported by the President. The Security Council then voted 10 to 1 (USSR), to adopt the joint draft resolution.

The adopted resolution, U.N. document 8/4216, September 7, reads as follows:

"The Security Council

"Decides to appoint a sub-committee consisting of Argentina, Italy, Japan and Tunisia, and instructs this sub-committee to examine the statements made before the Security Council concerning Laos, to receive further statements and documents and to conduct such inquiries as it may determine necessary and to report to the Security Council as soon as possible."

After the adoption, the Soviet Representative declared that the resolution had been approved in violation of the U.N. Charter and all existing rules of procedure. He therefore regarded it as illegal and not binding.

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262. Memorandum of a Conference With the President, White House, Washington, September 8, 1959[1]

[Here follows discussion unrelated to Laos.]

Regarding Laos, Mr. Dillon said that a second meeting had been held with SEATO representatives the previous day and that it had been quite an effective session—much better than the first one. We had pointed out that we simply want to be ready and to watch the situation closely. All seemed to understand better the seriousness of the matter. Mr. Dillon said that the UN procedure had proven to be a great success. We will have fact finders on the spot without a veto. The President said he understands that ammunition is now arriving in Laos and Mr. Dillon confirmed this.[2] Mr. Dillon added that we are sending out a communications setup so that we can be in quick touch with the situation. He added that there is some evidence that Vietminh personnel have been involved in the raids. He hoped that the presence of UN people will deter further operations. The President thought we should

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Secret. Drafted by Goodpaster. Dillon also prepared an account of this meeting. (Memorandum of conversation, September 8; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

[2] On September 8, Admiral Burke briefed Secretary of Defense McElroy on the activation of U.S. armed forces for possible use in Laos. (Memorandum from Burke to McElroy, September 8; Naval Historical Center, Burke Papers, Originator File)

make a standing practice in this situation that if any clear development occurs we should get information about it to the public quickly, since we must carry forward the psychological preparation.

[Here follows discussion unrelated to Laos.]

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263. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, September 8 and 9, 1959.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows information unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

Our Ambassador in Laos has considered it imperative to send U.S. observers to forward areas to confirm the gravity of the situation. He feels such action is necessary to provide maximum assurance that the serious steps now in process and contemplated are justified.[2]

State Department has informed Smith that they consider it unwise to risk sending U.S. observers into forward areas of Laos at this time. This is based primarily on the risk of capture. State further feels that the presence of U.S. observers might come to the attention of the UN and the press and compromise our whole position.[3]

The matter of appeal to SEATO is also a live issue. Pote Sarasin has informed us that no direct request has been given to the Thai government for intervention.[4]

Phoui has been convinced that he should defer an appeal to SEATO, according to Smith, but Phoui has informed us that the Crown Prince does not agree and wishes an appeal to be made at

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in telegrams 581 and 591 from Vientiane, both September 8. (Both Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Telegram 450 to Vientiane, September 8. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Reported in telegram 610 from Bangkok, September 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–559; included in the microfiche supplement)

once.[5] The USSR is of course in favor of reactivation of the ICC rather than dispatch of UN observers.

John S.D. Eisenhower

[5] Reported in telegram 585 from Vientiane, September 8. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

264. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, September 9, 1959.

SUBJECT

JCS Recommendations for Recasting our Policy Toward Laos

The attached JCS memorandum (Tab A)[2] to the Secretary of Defense recommends, "as a mater of urgency, that we recast our policy toward Laos to free the U.S. from all restrictions on its actions in Laos." It specifically proposes that we augment the U.S. training and support personnel in Laos (presumably discarding our obligations under the FAL training agreement) and that we establish a MAAG in Laos with U.S. personnel in uniform. The last two JCS recommendations are unclear, but, as I read them, we are already acting along lines they suggest.

Supplementing various points developed in the attached FE paper (Tab B),[3] I believe the following considerations generally argue *against* the JCS proposals:

1. No case is made that these steps are necessary. Yet if we were to take them it would mean breaching the training agreement we laboriously negotiated with the French and RLG and compromising our declared position honoring the spirit of the Geneva Accords.

2. The JCS proposal appears to be overtaken by events of the past weekend. We agreed only 2 days ago to follow a course of action inconsistent with that recommended by the Chiefs. We have now invited the UN to send some 60 to 80 fact-finders on to the Lao scene. Were the JCS proposal now implemented the fact-finders would probably find a lot more that was damaging to Washington than to Hanoi,

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret. Drafted by Green.

[2] Tab A is a copy of a draft of Document 254.

[3] Included in the microfiche supplement.

Peiping and Moscow. The latters' charges over the past two years would be confirmed even though we had observed the spirit of the Geneva Accords all that time.

3. If the military situation in Laos worsens, our next recourse is to SEATO. If we followed the JCS recommendations "to free the U.S. from all restrictions on its actions in Laos" and act "unilaterally," then we might forfeit the support in any future SEATO action of the UK, France and other member countries.

4. The impact on India, Cambodia and other interested non-SEATO countries in Asia would be damaging to U.S. interests in Laos and elsewhere.

5. What intelligence basis is there for the statements contained in paragraph 4 of the JCS memorandum? The recommendation for new urgent U.S. actions which the JCS admit would probably lead to "active U.S. military intervention" contrast strangely with Ambassador Smith's latest message (Vientiane's 592)[4] discussing the slowdown of activity and withdrawal of Communist forces. He suggests this is the result of prompt UN action. What is there in the current situation that would justify the U.S. taking the initiatives the JCS proposes? How could we rationalize it before the world?

On the other hand, I agree that we are faced with a severe long-term threat in Laos due in part to the inadequacy of the Lao Army. It needs more and better training; needs better equipment and direction. If the Joint Chiefs believe that the present training program (to which Defense gave its agreement) is not working and that it should be modified, then I believe we should be willing to discuss what modifications, if any, might be negotiable with the French.

In my opinion what underlies JCS thinking is fear that our military will be asked to do a crash rescue operation after most of Laos has gone under, and that our military will bear the burden of any sacrifices involved and of any possible failure. I think we must impress upon them that we shouldn't go directly to actions which would risk spreading the conflict until we know that lesser measures are not having any desired effect.

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[4] In telegram 592, September 8, Ambassador Smith anticipated a possible withdrawal of Viet Minh elements, and passed on Lao Army reports of a lack of activity in the areas of Sam Neua and Phong Saly. "While it seems too early for such a reaction to promptness of UN action it does not seem impossible Communists might have anticipated probable results of Security Council meeting three days ago and begun to take precautions accordingly." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–859)

265. Informal Notes of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of Defense (McElroy) and the Acting Secretary of State, Washington, September 9, 1959, 4:20 p.m.[1]

Secretary McElroy said he was anxious to have a meeting with CDD, Gen. Twining and the President re Laos. He said they're getting quite uncomfortable about what's going on but they don't want to go to the President on their own and he understands CDD has been talking to him about this. Secy McElroy said they're afraid if we have to do something in a hurry that there's not enough being done in advance. CDD said this is the first he was aware they felt this way. He said he knew they felt we should send some of our people up in front lines to gather intelligence information, but we felt this wouldn't be too good at this time. However, he said if there were additional things they wanted, he thought it would be a good idea for Secy McElroy, Gen. Twining and himself to have a talk, and after that, if necessary, to have a talk with the President.

Secy McElroy said he thinks things need to move on such matters as were covered in a memorandum from Nate Twining (JCS) on Laos[2] which has as primary requirement determination of whether we're going to continue to let the present agreement with the French override the feeling we have over here about this training going on or development of some capability to wage guerrilla warfare. He thinks this is a good deal more fundamental than observation business. He said that things they think should be done they are told can't be done because of UN, but that UN action may provide opportunity to do things that couldn't be started otherwise. CDD agreed it made sense to promptly talk this matter out. Secy McElroy said he was perfectly agreeable to have the meeting with CDD and without the President, and CDD said he just doesn't want to waste the President's time before we find out whether a real difference exists and have the facts and if there is a difference he agreed they should meet with the President promptly. CDD added that he had talked to the President briefly yesterday[3] about this and the President is very concerned and wants us to be in the strongest position for anything we may need to do. Secy McElroy said we are lacking a clear decision on whether we are going to do what is required to hold this piece of real estate. CDD said we've already made that decision but it's a question of the best way to go about it. Secy McElroy said he's afraid we may be given responsibility of holding it after there's only about a square yard left, and CDD agreed that nobody wants that to happen.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Secret.

[2] Document 254.

[3] See Document 262.

It was agreed that Secy McElroy, General Twining and Mr. Irwin would meet in CDD's office tomorrow (Thursday, September 10) at 2:00 p.m., and that Messrs. Parsons, Wilcox and Robert Murphy would also be present.[4]

[4] See Document 268.

266. Editorial Note

At the 418th meeting of the National Security Council, September 10, Allen Dulles gave the briefing on "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles reported to the Council on Laos and the following discussion ensued:

"In Laos, Mr. Dulles reported, there had been no great change in the military situation. It was possible that the Communists were removing the evidence preparatory to the visit of the U.N. Commission. The latter has no authority to carry out inspection in North Vietnam; accordingly Communist forces will probably be withdrawn into North Vietnam while the Commission is in the area. The Communists are concentrating on guerrilla warfare to exploit the weakness of the Laotian forces and the doubtful loyalty of the population. Mr. Dulles then displayed a map depicting the penetration of pro-Communist forces into Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces. Various evidence indicates North Vietnam involvement in the fighting in Laos, but no bodies of North Vietnamese troops have been found yet. Morale in the capital of Laos is high, despite some civilian-military friction; but morale in the villages is low. An effort is being made to earmark the troops which could be put into the struggle against the Communists. Thailand is considering furnishing some good, U.S.-trained forces; South Vietnam is thinking of sending troops [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

"Secretary McElroy asked whether the U.N. Commission would leave observers in Laos when it departed. Mr. Dillon said the U.S. position was that the lower-echelon officials of the Commission should remain in Laos for some time, even if the senior members stayed only a short time. It would be useful if some U.N. officials were put in a forward position. It would also be useful if the Commission carefully examined the whole situation in Laos, in order to refute the North Vietnam charge that the U.S. has bases in Laos and is commanding the Laotian army. Mr. Gray suggested that the Council keep itself informed on the situation in Laos."

Later in the same meeting, Karl G. Harr, Jr., Special Assistant to the President for Security Operations Coordination, briefed the Council on an Operations Coordinating Board Progress Report on Southeast Asia, August 12. The account of the brief discussion reads as follows:

"Mr. Harr briefly presented the reference OCB report on the subject. He said that notwithstanding the situation in Laos, considerable progress had been made in carrying out U.S. policy objectives with respect to Southeast Asia.

"Mr. Dillon said that the situation created by the Communists in Laos was, in no small measure, a reaction to the progress our policy had made in Laos and in Southeast Asia generally.

"The President concluded the meeting by observing that Laos would be very difficult to defend if Communist China and North Vietnam decided to attack." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, September 10; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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267. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, September 10, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Meeting on Laos

PARTICIPANTS

The Acting Secretary, Mr. C. Douglas Dillon
Mr. Robert Murphy, Under Secretary
Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., Assistant Secretary, INR
Mr. Woodruff Wallner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, IO
Mr. John O. Bell, Special Assistant, W/MSC
Mr. William I. Cargo, Director, UNP

Mr. J. Graham Parsons, Assistant Secretary, FE
Mr. Marshall Green, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, FE
Mr. Arthur B. Emmons, III, FE/SEATO
Mr. Daniel V. Anderson, Director, SEA

1. Mr. Dillon opened the meeting by saying that the recent JCS proposals[2] (including establishment of a MAAG in Laos and removal of all cover from our military personnel there) had not come up at the NSC meeting this morning.[3] However, he expected that these ques-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/9-1059. Secret. Drafted by Anderson and approved by Parsons and Murphy.

[2] See Document 254.

[3] See *supra*.

tions would be raised this afternoon at a meeting with the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Irwin and Generals Lemnitzer and Twining. He would invite Mr. McElroy to present his case at the outset.

2. Mr. Dillon noted that at the NSC meeting Mr. Allen Dulles had mentioned that a continued presence of the UN Subcommittee in Laos would be desirable even after the principals had left. Although the Subcommittee would not find much evidence of Communist complicity, it should be able to report on the extravagant charges made against the RLG and ourselves.

3. Mr. Murphy mentioned a news item regarding a new attack in Phong Saly Province.

4. Mr. Dillon referred to an item in today's briefing that the Viet Minh had been shuttle flying a plane from Dong Hoi and dropping supplies "somewhere". (DCI had said the plane was probably going to Tchepone.) Some doubt was expressed as to the probable destination but it was agreed that the flying time and estimated speed of the plane (150 mph.) would make it possible for these drops to have been made inside Laos.

5. Mr. Dillon then asked Mr. Parsons to explain our position regarding the military arrangement with the French. Mr. Parsons went into this subject in some detail, referring to the fact that the training agreement had been negotiated after considerable difficulty, that we had taken particular pains to obtain a benevolent attitude on the part of the British and Canadians as well as the Indians, and that we had heard nothing about the inadequacies of the plan, which had only begun to be put into effect at the end of August.

6. There was then a discussion of Ambassador Smith's telegram—Vientiane's 518 of September 3[5]—which was mentioned in the JCS paper and which dealt with such subjects as DRV capabilities, the significance of Sam Neua Province and the recommended issuance of a warning by the U.S. Government.

7. Mr. Parsons observed that any intervention in Laos should have SEATO cover. In contrast, the JCS paper was proposing that we "go it alone". Mr. Murphy agreed that this was the purport of the paper. Mr. Dillon said that acceptance of the JCS proposals would be tantamount to agreeing to no control by the State Department. He agreed that with the importance of our relationships in this matter, particularly with such countries as the UK and India.

8. Mr. Cumming pointed out that he did not agree entirely with the information used in the JCS paper. If the Viet Minh wished to press ahead, it would be impossible to strengthen the RLG sufficiently to meet the onslaught with success.

[5] Document 253.

9. Mr. Murphy asked about the proposed creation of a MAAG. Mr. Parsons said it could not be reconciled with the Geneva Agreement, and Mr. Dillon agreed.

10. Mr. Dillon asked what steps should be taken after the UN Subcommittee submits its report. Mr. Wallner said that would depend on what they reported; that it would be desirable to keep the matter in the SC until it gets to the GA. Mr. Dillon observed that we might have to go to the UNGA on the basis of "preserving the peace".

11. Mr. Cargo said that our action would depend on the character of the report. We might want to start consideration of it in the SC. It would be desirable to keep the group in the area for some time. While we would have to rely on SEATO, we should have GA action at least simultaneously.

12. Mr. Murphy discussed the SYG's note and considered a draft telegram prepared by IO.[6] Mr. Dillon said that Ambassador Lodge had commented that he had never seen the SYG operate less responsibly than he had in this crisis. Mr. Murphy observed that the SYG's message reflects unfavorably on us.

13. Mr. Dillon inquired about logistic support for the UN Subcommittee. Mr. Cargo said we had told members that the US was ready to provide support but that none had been requested thus far. He felt that the group should arrange their own transport and logistics as far as possible.

14. In a discussion of the use of helicopters, Mr. Murphy said it would be better to wait until the Subcommittee arrives in Laos and sees what it needs. However, Mr. Dillon recommended that we should be prepared to move in rapidly with helicopters if requested. It was agreed that about a week or so would be needed to fly them from the carrier *Thetis Bay*, which might be brought in close to Bangkok.

15. In reply to a question, Mr. Parsons estimated that the Subcommittee would consist of about 60 to 80 members. He expressed the hope that it would be able to find evidence of continuing "something or other" so it could remain in Laos. Mr. Dillon suggested that the Subcommittee have a look at the Tchepone area which was occupied sometime ago by the Viet Minh.

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[6] In his note, September 9, Secretary-General Hammarskjöld suggested that since the Laos U.N. subcommittee was operating under Article 29 of the Charter, it had a limited procedural function and should not take on substantive tasks. The text of the note was transmitted in telegram 341 from USUN, September 9; and Hammarskjöld's explanation of its significance is in telegram 340 from USUN, also September 9. (Both in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–959)

In the draft of telegram 209 to USUN, September 10, the Department of State asked the Mission to inform the Secretary-General that, while it agreed that the subcommittee had a limited function, its job was to get the facts efficiently; conclusions would then be obvious. (*Ibid.*) All three documents are included in the microfiche supplement.

16. Mr. Murphy observed that the group would need a lot of equipment, and Mr. Green mentioned aviation gas and helicopters.

17. Mr. Cargo said that the RLG should tell the Subcommittee what it should look at. However, it must have independence to find the facts. Mr. Parsons pointed out that the real reason for the operation was to deter aggression.

18. In a discussion of the attitude of the SYG, Mr. Parsons said that the SYG had come back from his last trip to the area with an unfavorable impression of US activities. We don't know where he got such an impression.

19. Mr. Cargo observed that the SYG wanted to be sure that the Subcommittee would act within the procedural concept. It seemed he had some right on his side but had gone a bit too far. Mr. Murphy observed that the SYG feels it his duty "to guide and superintend."

20. Referring to ways and means of obtaining information on Viet Minh activities, Mr. Parsons suggested that it would seem sensible to add several members to the staff of our Army Attaché. These officers could, of course, serve in uniform. Mr. Cumming said he could not agree to the JCS proposal to put uniforms on the members of the PEO and training teams.

21. Mr. Dillon then asked Mr. Parsons about the number of Americans in Laos in various categories and noted that there was a need to get an up-to-date statistical picture, including the timing of recent additions.

22. Mr. Parsons then observed that if we took away the civilian cover from our PEO and training teams we would be hurt on a very broad front. Mr. Cumming noted that for the very first time the USSR had taken a "neutral" position on the India–China issue. Some might interpret this as indicating a favorable trend of Soviet policy.

23. Mr. Anderson observed, that, in his opinion, the Viet Minh had the capability to apply much more pressure than they had so far; they could turn the heat on and off as suited their purposes.

24. Finally, Mr. Dillon commented favorably on a paper[7] prepared some ten days ago by Mr. Green, who said that this paper reflected the general thinking of the State–Defense–JCS–CIA working group on Laos, of which he was chairman. This paper stressed the importance of graduated deterrence and of the fact that this was a politico-military thrust by the Communists and not just a military challenge. Mr. Green said that his group was now working on a contingency paper[8] relating to "cranking up" SEATO and anticipating

[7] Apparent reference to Tab B to Document 251.

[8] Apparent reference to a paper entitled "Draft Contingency Plan for SEATO Operations in Relation to Laos," 2d revision, September 11. (Department of State, EA (Laos) Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1959)

precisely what steps the U.S. should take were military intervention under SEATO required.

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268. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, September 10, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

1. Improved Training of Lao Army
2. Improved Intelligence in Laos

PARTICIPANTS

Mr. C. Douglas Dillon
Mr. Robert Murphy
Mr. J. Graham Parsons
Mr. Francis O. Wilcox
Mr. Woodruff Wallner
Mr. Marshall Green
Mr. Neil McElroy
General N. F. Twining
General L.L. Lemnitzer
Mr. John N. Irwin II

Mr. McElroy opened the discussions by stating that he felt the time had come for mapping out our policies and actions with regard to holding on to Laos. He felt that there was no clear understanding as to just what our intentions were with regard to that country.

Mr. Dillon replied that we had, of course, kept in close touch with the President regarding all decisions taken during the past eventful week and our decisions have been in accordance with basic NSC policies.

Mr. McElroy replied that he agreed that NSC policies provided general guidance but that when a crisis like this arises then we must, with Presidential approval, decide on the particular course of action to be pursued. If the President thinks we must hold on to Laos, then that decision in itself entails great responsibilities for Defense and a great deal of careful advance planning and deployments. The second issue which Defense would like to raise with State today, he added, related to the training and equipment of the Royal Lao Army. He felt that we should give as rapid training to that Army as possible in guerrilla fighting and provide the Army with equipment and other supplies needed therefor. Mr. McElroy continued that the Defense Department appreciated U.S. obligations to the French in this respect but since the training agreement was signed there has been a change in the climate,

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1059. Secret. Drafted by Green and approved by Dillon on September 18.

justifying changes in the training program in our common interest. It is possible that the French would welcome the U.S. doing more under the current training program. Certainly it would be better from our point of view to have U.S. participation in the tactical training. Mr. McElroy also pointed out that his Department recognized the new situation created by the decision taken at the Security Council in New York last week-end, but this very action of the UN, which seems to be dampening down the Communist aggression, provides us with time and opportunity to move ahead with the kind of improvements in Lao training his Department had in mind.

Mr. Dillon agreed that it would be most advisable to have a talk about this matter with the President. He emphasized that this was a complex political-military problem; that as far as the UN is concerned we hope the fact-finding group will find evidence of aggression and will act as a continuing deterrent. One of our first steps in this crisis was to crank up SEATO; and although the initial response of the SEATO countries to the growing threat in Laos was apathetic, marked by a disposition to turn the whole problem over to the UN, there has been far better recognition in the past few days on the part of the SEATO countries of the need to get into a better position to act, if necessary. SEATO countries are now increasing their capabilities to assess developments in Laos. We do not propose to act unilaterally were military action to become necessary; we must maintain SEATO as a potentially active force in this situation and one within which any U.S. efforts to save Laos can be undertaken. Any actions we now take must bear in mind the sensitivities and interests of fellow SEATO countries and agreements concluded with the French, for which we had had to gain UK acquiescence as well as the understanding of the Canadians and others. Right along we have acted in a manner generally consistent with the Geneva Accords. Furthermore, we have made a lot of statements about no U.S. military bases and other U.S. military activities in Laos, and shortly the UN fact-finders are to arrive on the scene.

Mr. Dillon concluded that the State Department would nevertheless be prepared to consider any specific ideas Defense might have which were generally compatible with the requirements of the situation as outlined above, particularly the importance of not acting unilaterally.

General Lemnitzer, at Mr. McElroy's suggestion, outlined certain reasons why he thought we were in fact entitled to a broadened U.S. responsibility under the current training agreement. Such a broadened responsibility had really been envisaged at the time the agreements were signed, and since then both General Heintges and Ambassador Smith had reported that the French were unsatisfactorily carrying out their side of the agreement. On top of this, we had moved into a

"hotter" situation where there was an urgent need for action. He added that, quite frankly, our military don't think much of French training, although recognizing the importance of keeping our lines straight with the French.

Mr. Dillon replied that we cannot act in such a way as to expose ourselves to the United Nations, particularly in the absence of clear evidence of aggression. If a new situation arises requiring more drastic measures, then we can revise our training responsibilities and programs in Laos. But right now it would appear that the Viet-Minh may be pulling back or at least not pressing forward and this creates a difficult setting for taking the kind of steps the Defense Department appears to have in mind.

Mr. Irwin stressed that it was due to the very fact that the situation was easing off that we should make the best use of an unexpected period of grace to revise the training program by increased U.S. responsibilities for tactical training and by having more U.S. personnel on the job. He also stressed the Defense Department's appreciation of the importance of observing the spirit of the Geneva Accords, yet by improving the Lao Army we might spare ourselves later on the uninviting task of U.S. military action in Laos. Besides, there would seem to be considerable latitude for improvement under the Geneva Accords: for example, the French have only 500 military personnel in Laos although they could have some 5,000 under the Accords. Thus what the Defense Department has in mind is not to change the Geneva "device" but to make better use of that "device."

Mr. Parsons said that we would look into any practical scheme for enhancing our training potential.

The ensuing discussion turned on how many Americans there are now in Laos and in what categories, with General Lemnitzer pointing out that the Defense Department's plan for improving training contemplated only about 350 U.S. personnel in Laos.

Mr. Murphy suggested the training might be done outside Laos. Mr. Irwin thought that the current military challenge was such that the RLG could not spare the departure of any considerable groups for training abroad. Mr. Parsons proposed that it might be possible to have the training job done just across the Mekong in Thailand.

There was approval of this idea by Mr. McElroy, General Lemnitzer and Mr. Dillon.

Mr. Parsons went on to point out this idea had already been put to the Thai by the RLG but in rather inconclusive terms. Mr. McElroy thought that acceptance of this idea should be without prejudice to General Lemnitzer's proposal about training of the RLG in Laos. Mr. Dillon thought it inadvisable for the United States, unless a new situation arose, to start training RLG units in forward areas.

Mr. Murphy agreed, adding that we are assuming that there will be time enough, what with the dampening effect of UN fact-finders on the scene, to proceed with less risky and exposable measures.

General Lemnitzer pointed out that a minimum of three months would be required for training a battalion and that the Lao Army was in varying stages of training.

Mr. Dillon agreed with Mr. Murphy that we should get State and Defense working levels together and agree on a training proposal which we might be able to sell to the French. We would point out to the French that this might be a far less costly way of doing things than having to save Laos through SEATO action. However, Mr. Dillon recognized that the French would shy away from any measures they thought might undercut the UN program and that might by their lights be unduly provocative.

Mr. Wilcox described in some detail what might be the outcome of the UN fact-finding mission. Conceivably it might result in no UN decision except to keep the item on the agenda. On the other hand its report (or developments themselves) might require that the issue be taken to the General Assembly. Until we have completed this UN operation, Mr. Wilcox observed, we must be most careful not to forfeit the kind of support we might need in the General Assembly.

Mr. Dillon turned to the problem of getting better evidence of Communist aggression. He pointed out why the State Department is opposed to PEO's proposal for setting up some ten 6-man teams drawn from PEO. Alternatively, he suggested that Defense might add two or three "G–2 types" to the Army Attaché office in Vientiane. In that capacity, the U.S. investigators could be in uniform and could go to forward areas for investigations. This proposal was endorsed but it was left unclear as to how many new "G–2 types" should be assigned.

Mr. Parsons warned against converting PEO personnel for this new "G–2" task and it was agreed that any new ARMA assistants would be brought from elsewhere, possibly Viet-Nam.

Summing up, Mr. Dillon urged that we get ahead with:

1. Studying the two proposals for improving training (outside Laos and inside Laos);
2. The sending of new Assistant Attachés to Vientiane (this could be done right away); and
3. Mr. McElroy and Mr. Dillon talking this general problem over with the President at the earliest opportunity. [2]

[2] See *infra*.

269. Memorandum of a Conversation, White House, Washington, September 11, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Laos Situation

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Acting Secretary Dillon
Secretary McElroy
Under Secretary Murphy
General Twining, Chairman, JCS
Mr. Gordon Gray
Allen Dulles, Director CIA
General Goodpaster
J. Graham Parsons, Asst. Secy.

Mr. Dillon opened the meeting by saying that yesterday in discussion with Secretary McElroy and others[2] it had emerged that NSC policy in regard to Laos was clear but that Secretary McElroy felt that in anticipation of possible serious contingencies in Laos it would be helpful to talk with the President and have his approval for the general position we would take. Secretary McElroy then said that it was not entirely clear to him as to what our policy would be in connection with a specific crisis situation and he felt that it had to be worked out with the President. It was not clear whether we were thinking only in terms of training the Lao forces, or whether we intended to back them up with U.S. forces, if necessary.

The President remarked that as Laos was under the protection of SEATO, he assumed that it was our policy to do whatever was necessary militarily under SEATO and that we would not do anything completely by ourselves. If we acted unilaterally, then he did not see why we should have Collective Security Pacts. He would be willing for us to do our share, or perhaps even more than our share, under these Pacts but if our partners fell down and declined to participate, we should be very careful about going out by ourselves.

The Acting Secretary agreed and said that our SEATO partners had in fact been pretty slow at the beginning but now understood the situation better and showed indications that they would cooperate. It was their judgment and hope, however, that the UN could handle this situation.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1159. Top Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Parsons and approved by Murphy and Dillon. Another, slightly different account of this meeting is in a memorandum of conversation, September 11, prepared by Goodpaster on September 14. (Eisenhower Library, Project Clean Up, Meetings with the President; included in the microfiche supplement)

[2] See *supra*.

The President expressed approval of U.S. activities to date, reiterated that we should be prepared and said that SEATO should get ahead and decide what it would do. The Acting Secretary went on to say our readiness measures were proceeding and we would be ready if there was an invasion. However, the French and certain others had some skepticism about the degree of activity there had been in Laos and he felt we should be careful not to get too far out in front. The President inquired if our troops, presumably Marines, were ready and General Twining said that they were, with shipping available. The President indicated a preference for someone else to be ahead of us in this situation and there followed a brief discussion of SEATO plans during which our own US plan was briefly described.

Secretary McElroy indicated that what bothered Defense most was the inadequacy of Lao troop training which led us to fear that the Lao might collapse rapidly under pressure. He indicated that we were handicapped by our arrangements with the French and could only carry on technical and logistical training. Mr. Dillon explained that more was involved than just the French as the whole Geneva structure and the attitude of the British and others was important. He added that we were trying to work out some ideas on training with Defense and Secretary McElroy added that the optimum would be for Laos to be able to defend itself. With regard to relying on SEATO, he felt that this had never worked out too well and that SEATO could not act fast enough. He doubted we could get a decision to move quickly enough. In reply to the President's surmise, he then acknowledged that Defense wanted to be able to move troops within twenty-four hours if necessary. Mr. Dillon indicated that from their present readiness positions the Marines could be in Laos within three days, which might be fast enough given Lao conditions. He added that the Thais were willing to participate if we stood behind them, and could get in faster.

The President reiterated that SEATO ought to be in readiness and discussed command arrangements. He said that for once he hoped the U.S. would not have to be out in front and mentioned that the Australians and New Zealanders both were capable of providing competent command officers. It was generally agreed that the French should not be designated, with Mr. Murphy adding that the French were reluctant to get back into a fight in Indochina where they had been defeated before.

Mr. Dulles mentioned that an Army Attaché telegram[3] today indicated the French took the position that there was little or no evidence of Viet-Minh incursions and said it looked as though this might be the position they would take with the UN group. The meeting ended with

[3] Telegram CX–122, September 11. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1159; included in the microfiche supplement)

further discussion of military planning, both the SEATO plans and our plan. The President made it very clear that he desired SEATO planning to be firmed up quickly and said we would insist that all the members should be prepared to do their part.

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270. Editorial Note

On September 15, Assistant Secretary of State J. Graham Parsons met with French Ambassador Hervé Alphand. On the next day, Under Secretary of State Robert Murphy conferred with Alphand. These U.S. officials requested the meetings because of their concern over conflicting French and American views of the situation in Laos, especially the military threat posed by North Vietnam and the Pathet Lao and the role that the United Nations should play in meeting that danger. Speaking to Parsons on September 15, Alphand did not deny that France saw the situation differently; but he stated that both countries had similar objectives in keeping Laos "neutral but leaning towards the West." In the meeting on September 16, Alphand requested closer French-U.S. consultations on Laos and made the personal suggestion that Secretary Herter, French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, and British Foreign Secretary Lloyd use the occasion of their attendance at the United Nations to meet and discuss Laos. Murphy told Alphand that France's differing opinions on the threat "added up to negative attitude" which could only make the situation in Laos worse. (Memoranda of conversation, September 15 and 16; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1559 and 751J.00/9–1659, respectively; both included in the microfiche supplement) Regarding the Foreign Ministers meeting in New York, see Document 273.

271. Memorandum of Discussion at the 419th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, September 17, 1959[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and item 1, "U.S. Policy in the Far East;" see Document 44. The following discussion of Laos is taken from item 2, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security."]

Mr. Dulles said a new phase of the situation in Laos had begun with the arrival of the UN mission in that country.[2] The Laotian Government has greater confidence than we do that the evidence at hand will prove the involvement of North Vietnam in Laos. The Laotians claim that the evidence includes eight bodies, some armament, and some eye-witnesses. We have not examined this evidence. The USSR has called for a conference of the nations which attended the 1954 Geneva Conference on Southeast Asia.[3] A Chinese Communist communiqué just received supports the Soviet position.[4] The U.S. is somewhat worried by the French attitude, which is negative as concerns North Vietnamese involvement.

Mr. Dillon thought the French attitude to which Mr. Dulles had just referred was not a basic French policy, but was derived from the French mission in Laos. This mission is not competent, is anti-U.S., and favors neutralism for Laos. De Gaulle's emissary to Laos wanted to dismiss the French Ambassador but such an action was stymied by the French Foreign Office. Mr. Dillon believed Paris was receiving its information about conditions in Laos from unreliable sources. We have expressed to the French our concern that their field intelligence is inaccurate.

Mr. Dulles said some of the lower levels of the French Government in Paris insisted that the information being received by the French was correct. Sir Robert Scott, the UK Commissioner-General

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs. The drafting date is uncertain; the source text is dated July 1, 1960.

[2] According to telegram 698 from Vientiane, September 16, the members of the U.N. mission arrived in Vientiane on September 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1659)

[3] In the TASS statement, September 14, the Soviet Government called for a new conference of the 1954 Geneva Conference participants to consider the situation in Laos. The Soviets expressed deep regret that the Western Powers had used the U.N. Security Council to undermine the 1954 Geneva agreements, charged that the U.N. mission to Laos was a patent violation of the U.N. Charter, charged U.S. and SEATO officials with contemplating intervention in Laos, and claimed that certain elements in the West were using the Lao situation to poison international relations on the eve of Khrushchev's visit to the United States. The Soviet statement is summarized in telegram 881 from Moscow, September 15. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–1559) The Department of State responded with a statement on September 15; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, October 5, 1959, pp. 475–476.

[4] Not found.

for Southeast Asia, accepts as a fact the involvement of North Vietnam in Laos, possibly even including the participation of North Vietnamese regular troops.[5] In any event, Mr. Dulles thought North Vietnam had not abandoned its objective of overthrowing Laos. Mr. Dillon said the UK had sent Sir Robert Scott to the front in Laos after we had mentioned to the British Embassy here our opinion that the UK Ambassador in Laos was incompetent and that the UK Military Attaché had never been to the front.

[Here follow discussion unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Marion W. Boggs

[5] This conclusion is based on Scott's visit to Vientiane in early September 1959 as reported to the British Foreign Office. A paraphrase of that report is contained in telegram 1401 from London, September 12. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1259; included in the microfiche supplement)

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272. Special National Intelligence Estimate[1]

SNIE 68–2–59 *Washington, September 18, 1959.*

THE SITUATION IN LAOS

The Problem

To estimate Communist capabilities and short-run intentions in Laos, and to estimate the reactions of Communist and non-Communist countries to certain contingent developments.

Conclusions

1. We believe that the Communist resumption of guerrilla warfare in Laos was primarily a reaction to a stronger anti-Communist posture by the Laotian Government and to recent US initiatives in support of Laos. We consider that it was undertaken mainly to protect the Communist apparatus in Laos and to improve Communist prospects for gaining control of the country. (Paras. 7–8)

[1] Source: Department of State, INR–NIE Files. Secret. A note on the cover sheet indicates that the CIA, INR, and the intelligence organizations of the Army, Navy, and The Joint Staff participated in the preparation of this estimate, which was submitted to the U.S. Intelligence Board on September 18. All members of the Board concurred with the exception of the representatives of the AEC and FBI who abstained on the grounds that the topic was outside their jurisdiction.

2. The Communists probably believed: (a) that guerrilla warfare offered some prospects—at low risk—of promoting Communist objectives in Laos even if the Laotian Government received substantial moral and material support from the outside, and (b) that military forces which the West would be likely to commit inside Laos would be indecisive against the flexible Communist guerrilla tactics. (Para. 18)

3. We estimate that the Communists intend to keep the risks and the costs of their action on a low level and they are not likely in the near future to resort to large-scale guerrilla activity, at least so long as the UN fact-finding mission is in Laos. (Para. 19)

4. Most uncommitted and anti-Communist countries would probably support Western intervention in Laos if they were convinced that the Laotian Government's position was grave and that there was direct Communist Bloc support of the Laotian rebels. In that event, they would prefer that such action be taken under UN auspices. (Paras. 24–26)

5. Hanoi and Peiping have warned that any foreign military intervention in Laos would be considered as a direct threat to their national security. However, depending partly on the scale and nature of the military move, the Communist military reaction to the Western intervention, whether under UN, SEATO, or US auspices, initially would probably take the form of further covert North Vietnamese intervention rather than overt invasion. There probably would be less effort than at present to camouflage this intervention. This Communist action might, in the first instance, be limited to seizing substantial territory in Laos—such as Sam Neua and Phong Saly provinces—which we believe they could do under existing conditions with an augmentation of present guerrilla forces, and then using this situation for political bargaining purposes. The Communists would probably be prepared to accept prolonged and unresolved struggle, particularly if the country were geographically divided. If non-Asian forces were committed in Laos, the likelihood of an overt Communist invasion would increase.[2] (Para. 21)

6. If the Communists should come to believe that a Western intervention appeared capable of resolving the conflict and establishing firm anti-Communist control over Laos, they would then face the difficult decision of whether to raise the ante further, possibly to the point of openly committing North Vietnamese or Chinese Communist forces to the fighting. We estimate that both Communist China and the USSR wish to avoid serious risk of expanding into the Far East or

[2] The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, would delete this sentence, believing it oversimplifies the factors which might lead to an overt Communist invasion. [Footnote in the source text.]

beyond. We believe, therefore, that the Communists would seek through various uses of diplomacy, propaganda, covert action and guerrilla warfare to cause the West to back down. If, however, the Communists became convinced during the course of a series of actions and counteractions that the US intended to commit major US combat forces into Laos, we believe that the odds would be better than even that the Communists would directly intervene in strength with North Vietnamese and possibly Chinese Communist military forces.[3] (Para. 22)

[Here follows the "Discussion" section, which is included in the microfiche supplement.]

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[3] The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF believes that the likelihood of overt intervention by Chinese Communist or North Vietnamese forces would be significantly reduced if the Communists were convinced that the US would not limit its counteroperations in an expanding conflict to the territory of Laos.

The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; and the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Intelligence, Department of the Navy, believe that the last sentence of this paragraph overstates somewhat the willingness of North Vietnam and Communist China to use major military force against the US in the Laos situation, and therefore would delete the sentence and substitute the following: "If these measures failed, North Vietnam, and possibly Communist China, might resort to at least a show of military force in a last effort to make these pressures on the West effective, and the risks of overt Communist military intervention would thus increase. In the end, however, the Communists would be unlikely to press such use of force to a point which in their estimation would approach serious risk of large-scale hostilities." The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army, would add the following clause: "particularly if they were convinced that the US would not limit its counteroperations in an expanding conflict to the territory of Laos." [Footnote in the source text.]

273. Memorandum of a Conversation, Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, September 18, 1959, 10:30 a.m.[1]

SecDel/MC/15

PARTICIPANTS

US	*UK*
The Secretary	Rt. Hon. Selwyn Lloyd
Mr. Merchant	Sir Pierson Dixon
Mr. Wilcox	Harold Beeley
Mr. Parsons	Samuel Hood
Mr. Sisco	Denis Laskey

France
H. E. Maurice Couve de Murville
Ambassador Herve Alphand
Amb. Armand Berard

SUBJECT

Laos

The Secretary informed Lloyd and Couve that yesterday he briefly saw the Secretary-General, who expressed his strong desire to substitute at an early date a UN presence in Laos in lieu of the SC subcommittee. He described the SYG's proposals which include: submission of a resolution to the Security Council which would be vetoed by the Soviets; invoking the "Uniting for Peace" procedure to have the General Assembly consider this matter; submission of a resolution to the GA calling for the SYG to establish a UN presence in Laos and/or in the area generally. The Secretary informed Lloyd that the SYG seemed fearful that the Article 29 precedent would be carried beyond its procedural character. The Secretary said that in his judgment the subcommittee ought to remain at least long enough to make its observations, and it should not be replaced prematurely by the kind of action the SYG has in mind. The Secretary believed that the idea of a UN presence as contemplated by the SYG was a good one, but it should not be pushed prematurely. Lloyd said the UK had no objection to the idea of a UN presence as Hammarskjold has in mind. Lloyd pointed out that the Spinelli precedent in Amman[2] has been useful. Lloyd agreed fully with the Secretary, however, that the SC subcommittee should remain in Laos as long as desirable and that subsequent

[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Confidential. Drafted on September 21 and approved by Herter on September 24. A separate memorandum of conversation covers the discussion of SEATO military planning; see Document 45.

[2] Pier P. Spinelli, U.N. Special Observer on Arab Affairs, went to Amman in June 1959 to help mediate the border dispute and to faciliate resumption of relations between Jordan and the United Arab Republic (Syria).

UN action should not be taken prematurely. Couve agreed also that the subcommittee should be permitted to do its work before consideration is given to possible next steps.

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274. Memorandum of a Conversation, Secretary-General Hammarskjöld's Office, New York, September 22, 1959, 12:10 p.m.[1]

SecDel/MC/49

PARTICIPANTS

United States
The Secretary
Ambassador Wadsworth
Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Parsons

United Nations
Dag Hammarskjold, Secretary-General of UN

SUBJECT

Laos

The Secretary General remarked that it was odd that the Lao Acting Foreign Minister was coming here next week with the Foreign Minister already here.[2] The critical implication in his remark was that even while the Security Council Subcommittee was in Laos a Lao Cabinet Minister was coming to make further contact in the UN. Mr. Hammarskjold also mentioned a report that Sam Neua had been closed to press correspondents which he thought was harmful to the Lao Government's interest as it could reduce the credibility of their reports about Viet Minh interference in Laos. He remarked he had now had a report from the group in Vientiane which he showed to the group to document his remark that it was rather curious in its brevity and lack of information.

The Secretary General said that with respect to the Subcommittee it was his impression it would travel to the troubled area after it had settled down a bit in Laos and its movements would appear less dramatic. He himself had not had much opportunity to talk to Laos'

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[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199. Confidential. Drafted on September 28, but there is no indication on the source text who drafted the memorandum.

[2] In telegram 828 from Vientiane, September 24, the Embassy reported that Acting Foreign Minister Sisouk had told press correspondents that he would only leave for New York upon departure of Foreign Minister Khamphan Panya. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2459)

neighbors but he was talking soon with both the Lao Foreign Minister and the Burmese Foreign Minister. He thought Laos was very much a case for continuing UN civilian presence and that the Subcommittee's presence had already done good in deterring further fighting.

The Secretary fully agreed on the value of the Subcommittee's presence and hoped they would do a good job of fact-finding. The Secretary General remarked that it was an able group and so he was hopeful they would make the best possible report in the circumstances. The Secretary remarked that of this group he knew only Bourguiba whom he thought an able and sensible man. Mr Hammarskjold remarked that the USSR paper calling for a second Geneva conference had now been circulated in the US and while it was weakly drafted in spots it showed evidence of strong insistence on certain points. The Soviets claimed that the convening of the Security Council meeting was illegal as well as action under Article 29. As evidence that this paper had been written in Moscow, he remarked that when several factual errors were pointed out to the Russians here, they remarked that it could not be changed having been sent to them textually. While in general the paper contained nothing new, it indicated that the next round on Laos in the United Nations would be a harsh one. He went on to say that thus far the Subcommittee has not brought up the matter of its itinerary in Laos but as matters are obviously proceeding more slowly than expected, he felt that the previous matter concerning which he spoke to the Secretary could be closed for the moment. (This was the proposal for almost immediate action in the Security Council and then in the General Assembly in order to obtain a longer term UN presence in the area.) Reverting to the possible travels of the Subcommittee he said that with only ten people or so involved this was not a difficult problem.

The Secretary remarked that he had thought Mr. Hammarskjold's idea of a continuing UN presence was excellent but that for the sake of the prestige of the UN, it would be well for the present Subcommittee to stay a while in Laos and see what they could make of the situation and generally do as effective job as possible. The Secretary General responded that of course the group was not empowered to make substantive recommendations but their reports could be so drafted as to imply what they thought should be done. In any event, he felt they should complete their job and make their report, including in it language which made clear that their presence had been useful. Once this was done, the question of substantive consideration in the UN could be taken up for future action. However, this was clearly further off than he had first thought and at the moment, he agreed with Mr. Wilcox's thought that the group had had a tranquilizing effect.

275. Memorandum of a Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State (Dillon) and the French Ambassador (Alphand), Department of State, Washington, September 24, 1959[1]

SUBJECT

Statement of French Military Attaché in Laos

After Ambassador Alphand had finished talking with me on another subject I told him I had one item in connection with Laos which I wanted to raise with him. I recalled his conversation of September 16[2] with Under Secretary Murphy, and, in particular, the view which I understood was shared by the French Government and ourselves that our officials in Vientiane should make every effort to present a unified position in conversations with the U.N. Subcommittee, and not emphasize any minor divergencies as to the factual situation which we might have.

I then said we had just received a report which had disturbed us very much. We had heard that the French Military Attaché had informed the U.N. Subcommittee that there was no real foreign military intervention in Laos, and that the Laotian Government's action in requesting U.N. intervention was possibly inspired by the political aims of "a certain large power".[3] Ambassador Alphand agreed that this was certainly a most serious thing. He said that as a result of his talk with Mr. Murphy and later talks of Couve de Murville with the Secretary, a very strict instruction had been sent to Vientiane a few days ago directing that the French Embassy, and particularly the military elements there, do everything possible to present a united front with the United States. If the statement attributed to the French Military Attaché had been made after the receipt of these instructions it would indeed be a most serious situation. In any event, Ambassador Alphand said he would promptly call it to the attention of the Quai d'Orsay in Paris and he was sure that they would see to it that this did not happen again.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2459. Secret. Drafted by Dillon.

[2] See Document 270.

[3] Reported in telegram 811 from Vientiane, September 23. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2359)

276. Telegram From the Mission at the United Nations to the Department of State[1]

New York, September 30, 1959—8 p.m.

393, For Secretary and Wilcox from Wadsworth. Re: Laos. As arrangements were being made with SYG today, in accordance Deptel 297,[2] Hammarskjold sent me 5-page letter addressed to you on this very subject.[3] In light of this, we have delayed complying with instructions pending your consideration of his letter and further word from Department. Letter being pouched Secretary tonight.

Feel it important to make certain comments on SYG's text in hope these comments will facilitate consideration his ideas and any response thereto.

First, general comment re letter as whole: SYG makes legal argument and presents ultimate political proposal both of which in our view are fairly sound. However, he intersperses his legal argumentation and his political presentation with material which is obviously emotional and which seems to stem from preconceived ideas and prejudices, as well as misunderstanding of our position, basis for which it is difficult ascertain.

Hammarskjold gives impression that from outset our proposal to create subcomite whose establishment could avoid veto was basically sharp practice; that all along it was intended, under guise of procedural actions, to take substantive step whose real character would only gradually be revealed with passage of time. It is in this sense he refers to possibility subcomite coming up with report which is not clearcut. He seems to assume there is conspiracy to avoid having SC meet within reasonable time to consider it and somehow or other to slip into semipermanent establishment of UN presence in area by retention for indefinite time of subcomite. In this same sense he speaks of majority undermining UN by flouting rules. He refers to repeated assurances (by sponsors) this action was procedural as if it were really conceived to be substantive. He imputes such fears to Latin Americans and Afro-Asians in bottom their hearts.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–3059. Secret; Priority.

[2] In telegram 297, September 29, the Department of State instructed the Mission in New York to encourage Hammarskjöld to leave some elements of the subcommittee behind in Laos; discourage his hope that the Soviet Union would agree to a Security Council decision establishing a U.N. presence in Laos; enlist his support in obtaining maximum assistance from the U.N. Secretariat staff for the subcommittee; and get him to discourage the staff from unduly restraining the subcommittee. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–2959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Letter from Hammarskjöld to Herter, September 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2959; included in the microfiche supplement)

Despite all this, SYG does, however, believe that, within carefully defined limits, action taken by SC under Art 29 even as modified, he states, by Art 24, is "formally correct". He seeks emphasize procedural character of this action by injecting note of substance into new SC consideration which he feels would draw clear contrast with previous procedural phase. It is apparently for this reason that he proposes, upon receipt of a report not warranting drastic action but justifying continued UN presence, Council be convened, inscribe "question of Laos" on agenda "as substantive item" and seek adopt proposal establishing UN presence. SYG volunteers to try to sell such idea to Russians without hoping very much for success and in fact anticipating veto. He thinks vetoed res which is properly drafted will carry the day easily in GA in minimum period of time. Such action, he contends, would not detract from but actually consolidate value and validity of SC's procedures on Labor Day.

SYG then gets to nub of what he regards as real problem, namely, difficulty of UN operation without clear lines of authority and directional responsibility, further weakened by fact it is committee rather than single individual. He would set up operation very similar to Spinelli mission in Amman. This would be clearly under his direction—he alleges he would be "useful buffer"—saying that, after all, real work has got to be done anyway by Secretariat which does not have direct authority. It is clear that SYG has in mind in this letter what we have understood from various sources he has had in mind for some time, namely, establishment of his personal representative not simply for Laos but for entire Southeast Asian area. This would be in line with his idea of having network of UN representation in danger spots of world.

In concluding paras SYG reiterates his willingness not to rush into creation of his type "UN presence", nor prematurely end subcomite. In fact he willing see elements subcomite remain on between time of new SC consideration and arrival of new presence. In essence he is not so much in hurry to make some kind of change as he is anxious, within reasonable time, to get what he wants. His views on timing are not far from what we would suggest, i.e., in about month report comes to SC and we move into his type "UN presence." His ultimate conclusion certainly is not too far from our position and indicates constructive movement on his part.

We believe SYG's letter should be answered by Secretary weaving such of points from Depcirtel 387[4] and Deptel 297 into it as possible but also emphatically setting forth basic US position regarding sub-

[4] In circular telegram 387, September 26, the Department of State provided appropriate posts with a brief summary of the U.S. attitude toward Laos U.N. subcommittee and subsequent U.N. action. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2659; included in the microfiche supplement)

comite's operations in order to remove what still seems to be considerable misunderstanding. If we can achieve latter objective, we should be able to get SYG to deal with practical problems of current subcomite operations realistically.

Wadsworth

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277. Editorial Note

At the 420th meeting of the National Security Council on October 1, Allen Dulles reported on the Lao situation in the briefing, "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles' report and a brief comment by Secretary of Commerce Frederick H. Mueller read as follows:

"In Laos, Mr. Dulles reported, the UN Subcommittee has not entirely deterred the Communists from small-scale activities in the areas which it has not visited. Bad feeling existed between Phoui and the French in Vientiane. Paris was attempting to cooperate with the Laotian government, but the French military attaché in Vientiane has asserted that there has been no real Communist intervention in Laos and that the UN activity is fulfilling the aims of a 'certain large foreign power.' The French are also exercised over a *New York Times* article on the end of the special position of France in Laos. The UN Subcommittee was experiencing a certain amount of difficulty, but was planning a trip to the front which might produce more information.

"Secretary Mueller said the Thai Minister of Finance had recently said it was impossible to tell the difference between Laotians and North Vietnamese except by their dialect." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, October 2; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

278. Letter From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Irwin)[1]

Washington, October 2, 1959.

DEAR JACK: The Chief of PEO in Laos, with the concurrence of CINCPAC and of our Ambassador in Vientiane, has proposed that his American staff be increased by 40 persons. While we are in no position to question the military justification for this proposal, we are very much alarmed by its probable impact and implications.

Mr. Dillon's letter of September 6 to Mr. Knight[2] gave over-all approval of certain additional actions to meet the emergency situation in Laos, including funds for the increase in PEO personnel. This specific proposal has required further scrutiny because of the difficult problems it raises relative to the over-all U.S. position in Laos.

I am sure you are aware of the rapid expansion that has been taking place in the number of Americans who are being sent to Laos in connection with various aspects of our programs there. I believe you will be interested in the enclosed memorandum on this subject.[3] It shows that the number of our official family in that small country is expected to increase from about 249 on July 15 to no less than 494 by October 15, if various proposals, of which the increase in the PEO staff is one, are approved.

You will readily appreciate that such an increase involves support problems in Vientiane as well as problems of an international political nature. Great circumspection is required on our part to avoid forcing the British, French and Indians into a position where, because of their obligations as participants in the Geneva Agreements machinery, they must take cognizance of U.S. military aid to Laos as contravening the spirit of the Agreement on Laos.

Furthermore, as the attached memorandum points out, our Commonwealth and French allies are fearful that too rapid a build-up of the American presence is unnecessarily provocative. Meanwhile, the Communists are doing their best to magnify these issues to a point

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 353 Laos. Secret. According to a copy of this letter in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/10–259, Anderson was the drafter and FE, SEA, and U/MSC cleared it. Irwin "noted" this letter.

[2] Not printed. (*Ibid.*, SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, Memoranda concerning increase in PEO staff Laos)

[3] The attached memorandum, September 25, was not with the source text; a copy of it is attached to a copy of this memorandum *ibid.*, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, Irwin. It listed in memorandum form the U.S. personnel in Laos on July 15, August 15, and September 15, and pending requests for increases effective October 15.

where they will split the Western world and weaken its over-all approach to a larger design for the safeguarding of Laos through united action in the UN and SEATO.

I should therefore be grateful if you could have this subject re-examined and let us have the views of your Department.[4] Could we do the job with fewer Americans? As you know, we are all doing our best to keep the situation in Laos from getting out of hand and at the same time implement the President's national policy directive of August 5, 1959, that each department "insure that the total number of U.S. official personnel in each country is held to a strict minimum consistent with sound implementation of essential programs."

Sincerely yours,

Bob

[4] On October 20, Shuff responded that the Department of Defense "appreciated and understood" the concern of the British, French, and Indians over augmented U.S. training activities in Laos, but he believed that "positive and aggressive measures" were required to ensure the quality of the Lao Army, to administer the U.S. military assistance program there, and to save Laos from Communist domination. The Department of Defense, therefore, requested rapid Department of State approval of an increase in the strength of the PEO in Laos. (Letter from Shuff to Murphy, October 20; Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 63 A 1672, 353 Laos; included in the microfiche supplement)

279. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, October 6, 1959.

SUBJECT

Continuing UN Presence in Southeast Asia

I believe that, on balance, Mr. Hammarskjold's proposal for the establishment of a continuing UN presence in Southeast Asia is one we should not oppose and I therefore recommend that you sign the attached letter.[2] While the merits of his proposal are self-evident it involves a decision, if not *exactly* a precedent, for continuing UN activity of a regional nature. There are also certain problems, the seriousness of which cannot be gauged at this time. For example:

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751G.00/10–659. Secret. Drafted by Green.

[2] The letter was sent on October 8. (*Ibid.*, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Laos 1951–1961; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. The Soviets are likely to protest that any continuing UN presence is an effort to replace the Geneva Accords; and this in turn might cause the Secretary General, as well as the British and French, to seek to offset Soviet concern by restating the validity of the Geneva Accords and of the machinery established under the Accords. This could give rise to difficulties with the Lao Government.

2. It is not clear whether the UN presence in Southeast Asia would be extended to include South Viet-Nam and North Viet-Nam. Though neither is a member of the UN, it might be important on occasion to have representatives visit South Viet-Nam (as for example in performing good offices in one of the recurring disputes between Cambodia and South Viet-Nam). On the other hand, such a development might generate undesirable pressures for the UN to perform similar good offices between Laos and North Viet-Nam.

3. It is possible that a UN presence in Southeast Asian countries could limit our freedom of action there, especially in our military training and equipment programs. In the last analysis, the security of the free countries of Southeast Asia depends upon the United States and there could be occasions when bloc pressures upon the Secretary General or the divergent views and interests of even our French and British allies could have a deleterious effect on the attitudes of a future UN area representative towards U.S. or SEATO policies. We do not know who will replace Mr. Hammarskjold and he himself has exhibited at times serious misgivings as to U.S. activities in Southeast Asia.

4. Whereas the Lao and other governments may, under current circumstances, be prepared to welcome a continuing UN physical presence in Southeast Asia, they may find such a presence galling and irritating in the years ahead.

In view of the above difficulties and dangers, the attached draft letter seeks to leave our position reasonably flexible and it stresses that the initiative for any continuing UN presence in Southeast Asia should come from the countries of that area.

280. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 8, 1959—8 p.m.

1015. For Murphy and Parsons from Smith. From recent telegrams,[2] it appears to me that British, US and French policies on Laos are divergent to extent they threaten to place US in position where if political and military situation Laos were to deteriorate seriously, US might (A) fail receive helpful British-French support (material, moral or political) for our policies, or even (B) be strongly criticized by them for programs and policies which are not palatable to them but which they are either unwilling or unable to replace with adequate programs of their own. If this situation is not brought to a head and discussed fully and frankly with British and French now, I believe we face the probability that if situation in Laos deteriorates markedly in the next few months we could find ourselves by ourselves in unduly exposed position. I therefore urge that in any top-level discussions with the British and the French, we be especially careful to avoid reaching only a surface agreement which could conceal basic differences in viewpoint that would rise to surface and handicap cooperation at any time as the situation worsens.

British and French positions appear recognize, as do all other SEATO members and many other UN members, free world need to preserve Laos from Communist domination. Many of them seem quite positive some sort "peaceful" permanent UN presence should now be established here to save Laos from being overwhelmed. But British and French dwell heavily on "over-Americanization" or "too large American presence" as being unnecessarily provocative and in their insistence that problem is essentially political and economic rather than military seem convinced that if RLG would just be less severe on NLHX and kinder to tribespeople whole problem would fade away. They regard as of little significance and as bit beside the point what we regard as basic—obvious need for improvement's in FAL military effectiveness. They also appear unimpressed even with all-out RLG endeavor increase rural self-help program and our stepped-up road and economic support programs. Both Sir Robert Scott and French Ambassador Clarac asked me why we could not channel much or all of our aid through a UN agency. There even seems to be doubt whether British and French will stand by the full spirit of their SEATO

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–859. Top Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, and London.

[2] Such as telegrams 955 from Vientiane, October 3, 928 from Bangkok, October 7, and 1000 from Vientiane, October 7. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–559, 751J.00/10–759, and 751J.00/10–759, respectively)

commitments to Laos, unless to exaggerate "invasion in full uniform with VM epaulettes and battle flags at points observable from British and French MILATTs' armchairs Vientiane not made." Even in face of present situation British and French continue object or at least disapprove our bringing in here numbers of social, economic and military advisers we find essential to insure Lao necessary know-how to use our support effectively and insure by adequate end-use checks that American congressional support will have possibility of continuation in magnitude and time required.

Without the 100% backing from at least French and British for our policies and programs in Laos, our chances of retaining effective cooperation of RLG and accomplishing the task within the magnitude of aid so far contemplated will be reduced to a point where US objectives could well be defeated despite anything that I and the Country Team can do here locally.

In view this situation, I recommend we propose to British and French our readiness reduce sharply our present principal responsibility for saving Laos, calling on then and/or on UN to share overall burden we now carrying. I harbor little illusion that this offer likely be accepted, but the act alone of making it would seem likely have the benefit of (1) presenting constructive proposal along lines British and French imply desirable, which they would then have responsibility of thinking through and accepting or alternatively coming up with more practicable programs their own or else be forced accept without present reservations need to support wholeheartedly, at least in diplomatic area, our programs here; (2) dramatizing to British and French (and eventually to neutrals if proposal went so far as to reach UN stage) that we definitely not interested in Americanizing or militarizing Laos but only in keeping it free and out of Communist hands; and (3) making clear, in detailed consideration, that UN is not in position furnish kind of comprehensive security and economic programs which would provide satisfactory substitute for ours.

This démarche would possibly also present useful opportunity make clear to British and French what we regard as some of basic points on which we would need expect their understanding and support, if they choose to decline accept our turnover offer, and where we would have to form common front vis-à-vis RLG. Such clearing of air particularly necessary now when change in Commie tactics from battle of ballots to one including bullets, if not to bullets alone, will require even greater free world assistance and advice to RLG, which may have to continue over prolonged period if indeterminate hit-run guerrilla tactics become long-range Commie program. Another new factor, making even more essential parallel allied Ambassadorial level approaches to Laos, is recent transformation of Crown Prince into Prince

Regent which has resulted in his strong and stubborn will and only intermittently available presence being interjected as powerful influence upon policymaking function RLG at very highest levels.

Following are some major points on which during next year we will need, as I see it, this tripartite agreement:

1. UN subcommittee presence be continued as long as possible. If it lapses for any reason we should urge that it be quickly replaced by some other form of UN presence—such as an observer (but only if exclusively for Laos). To provide further moral support and evidence of international interest in preserving Laos, suggest through appropriate measures that specialized UN agencies be encouraged establish in Laos at least some form of supplementary support.

2. Remaining SEATO governments to be most strongly encouraged to establish permanent representation in Vientiane so that in case the military situation were to deteriorate member governments could, even without UN observers' assessment, be in position act quickly on basis up to date information.

3. Free world efforts to save Laos must no longer be inhibited by limitations or controls on sovereign actions Laos or of right Laos to request aid and support from any friendly nation, although of course, Laos will continue undertake remain neutral and will act in full accordance with spirit principles peaceful coexistence expressed in Geneva Accords.

4. Relatively large US presence in Laos temporarily unavoidable as part collective free world effort to keep country from falling under Commie domination (such acceptance would permit us place technical advisors and trainers in appropriate ministries and if necessary at regional military headquarters, who would be able provide effective pre-audit advice and carry out end-use checks on our military and economic programs. This absolutely vital if Congress is to be persuaded continue provide aid to Laos at necessary levels and if Lao are to be trained to do for themselves within reasonable period.

5. As corollary, if military situation further deteriorates may be necessary extend presence PEO personnel down to battalion level. In absence other feasible arrangements, where local situation requires, British and French should be prepared on ad hoc basis allow to pass without public comment such unusual activities as US advice FAL re combat operations in order assure most effective defense against VM–PL attack). At field team level American-French cooperation already closest possible and we here would welcome greatest possible French-British-American cooperation this area.

6. No pressure on RLG for negotiations with and/or acceptance into Cabinet of NLHX leaders but rather full support of Phoui Sananikone as best possible Prime Minister, certainly now in absence suitable alternates with his experience and moderating influence, and proven ability effuse and exploit effectively and constructively energies of CDNI and Army group but with leeway to improve Cabinet by replacing Pan, Tan and Liep with Chao Nith, Somsanith and Leuam Insienxiengmay. We must insist on continuation reasonable balance LHL, CDNI and Army representation in Cabinet and avoidance resort unconstitutional methods to establish military or other type dictator-

ship. Extension of this principle should provide for end to idea that RLG owes it to DRV to be "nice" to NLHX and former PL beyond minimum legal requirements.

7. As life present Assembly runs out, we should back moves authorize and encourage Prince Regent extend its life for another year, and to then continue Phoui government full powers for another year, with next elections to be held in December 1960.

Chances for pulling Laos through have never been, since we entered picture here, really very bright except possibly during first few months 1959. At relatively low cost, we have managed to date not only prop up RLG but make it look as if it might be able take few halting steps forward on its own. Change in Commie tactics now seriously imperils that painful progress and can even bring down RLG superstructure, which now standing shakily above Lao morass on four legs—LHL, CDNI, Army and Prince Regent. Just as their continued close cooperation is necessary to keep structure from falling, so is it necessary for three major Western powers with most persuasive influence here to stand clearly together on all basic essentials. If British and French leave us or fail to make parallel moves at crucial moments, we will be faced with much more costly task if not with almost inevitable failure (affecting them as well as us). Merit of proposal contained herein appears to me to be that while hardly possible of adoption by British and French,[3] it might have tonic effect of putting whole question future of Laos on frank and forthright plane which could lead to more constructive and greater allied unity re Laos not only here but in UN, SEATO and in major capitals.

Smith

[3] In telegram 1689 from Paris, the Embassy endorsed many of the proposals in telegram 1015 from Vientiane, but "would recommend against basing US courses of action on supposition GOF would be unwilling consider taking on some new burdens in Laos." The Embassy in Paris believed that greater French effort in Laos would be to U.S. advantage and therefore should be sought. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1659; included in the microfiche supplement)

281. Memorandum of a Telephone Conversation Between the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Murphy), Washington, October 16, 1959, 4:45 p.m.[1]

Telephoned Mr. Murphy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. Mr. Murphy said he did not think they overloaded Laos. Secy said Lodge is having a session with Hammarskjold, who is concerned about Laos, and asked what Mr. Murphy thought about Lodge telling Hammarskjold he has looked into the situation personally [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].[2] Mr. Murphy thought that was all right. Mr. Murphy said, however, he felt perhaps now was the time for us in some way to show hurt feelings to Hammarskjold about his suspicions. Mr. Murphy said in this present Laos situation he thinks it is all right and we could pout a bit with Hammarskjold.

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Herter Papers, Phone Calls and Misc. Memos. No classification marking. There is no indication of a drafter.

[2] In telegram 418 from USUN, October 16, Lodge reported as follows:

"Pursuant to call from Wilcox I telephoned SYG this afternoon and told him we had not instigated Phoui to come to New York and that we were against it, and that there were no 'quiet Americans' in Laos.

"SYG said Sisouk had told him this afternoon that King was sick and Prime Minister might not come." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1659)

282. Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission at the United Nations[1]

Washington, October 17, 1959—11:42 a.m.

376. Re urtel 403.[2] Amb Lodge should seek early appointment with SYG to discuss in detail questions re future Laos.

[1.] In order that no misunderstanding on Hammarskjold's part about U.S. intentions regarding future of Laos, following factors should be pointed out clearly to him:

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–959. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Sisco, Buffum, and Cargo; cleared by Chapman, Green, Parsons, and Wilcox; and approved by Murphy.

[2] As reported in telegram 403 from USUN, October 8, Hammarskjöld planned to wait about 4 days after the publication of the subcommittee's report and then inform the President of the Security Council that he intended to travel to Laos to arrange for the establishment of a U.N. presence. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–859; included in the microfiche supplement)

(a) We consider real problem in Laos is not primarily military but political. Laos could not remain free if Communists are permitted to grow within body politic and are supported from outside country, and protected from counter action on part RLG. US will take all appropriate and feasible action to assure Laos is not lost to Communists. We think that support Laos has been receiving from US and France and ability SEATO act if and when this might become absolutely necessary are vital factors in maintenance Laotian independence. We see no incompatibility, and assume SYG sees none, between instrumentalities and continuing UN presence in Laos.

(b) Because of its special nature, Laos should in our opinion adopt public posture of neutrality. By this we mean Laos should not belong to great power alliance and foreign bases (except Seno) or other foreign military installations should not be permitted on Laotian territory. We do not mean ideological neutrality or any obligation on part of RLG to accept assistance from both East and West.

(c) RLG should in our opinion not deny Geneva agreements but rather act in spirit of agreements.

(d) RLG should maintain only moderate sized army obviously having purely defensive capacities. It is our hope that US can phase out its training program as soon as RLG forces adequately trained. However, latter is essential for stability and peace in SEA.

(e) Programs of rural and social development should be expanded and accelerated.

(f) Other free world countries should be encouraged give economic and other aid to Laos; U.S. desires no monopoly in this regard.

(g) As long as RLG does not wish negotiate with DRV it should not be forced to do so.

If SYG's views differ fundamentally from policy which we intend follow toward Laos, he might wish reconsider whether he still desires to accept responsibility for maintaining UN presence there.

2. As we understand SYG plan described reftel, ultimate objectives would be to establish continuing UN presence in Laos, to which US has already agreed in principle. If USSR goes along with procedure not requiring formal UN action, Department considers this would be preferable to formal UN debate on problem since such debate could prove acrimonious and difficult to control. Therefore Department agrees with recommendations contained in "Comment" section reftel,[3] and you authorized so inform SYG. At same time, believe procedure outlined in SYG September 29 letter to Secretary, envisaging possible SC and GA action, should be held in reserve in event SYG finds through his consultations that USSR will not in fact agree to procedure described urtel 403.

[3] In this section of telegram 403, the Mission recommended a favorable response to Hammarskjöld's letter of September 29 (see footnote 3, Document 276). In this proposed response, Herter would urge the Secretary-General to send a letter to the President of the Security Council indicating his intention to appoint a U.N. representative in Laos unless there was an objection, thus placing the onus of opposition on the Soviet Union.

3. However, important points still require clarification, and Ambassador should seek answers to following question:

(a) Is he still thinking in terms UN presence for Southeast Asia or exclusively for Laos? (For Phoui's views see Vientiane's tel 1025 repeated USUN 123.)[4] In view what we understand are Laotian views, and since primary danger is in Laos, we believe UN presence should be established there and question of regional presence should be deferred until possible later stage. (Dept may have additional info on this point upon receipt replies from field.)

(b) Is SYG fully aware extent responsibility placed on balance Subcommittee group remaining in Laos with approach good fighting weather and is he prepared cooperate in assuring their presence serves as maximum possible deterrent to renewed aggression until new UN presence established? Department greatly concerned about restrictive nature recommendations made to Subcommittee by Secretariat. If, for example, remaining Subcommittee staff inhibited from receiving evidence on any new outbreak of hostilities, as now appears case, risk incurred that deterrent effect will be greatly vitiated. Renewed hostilities under these circumstances would make it more difficult, when transition to new arrangement is contemplated, argue UN most effective instrument for protecting Laos. If SYG agrees with these views, Department hopes he will be willing let Subcommittee know that its staff in Laos should give maximum cooperation to RLG in response to any requests for assistance in receiving new evidence.

(c) What precise terms of reference does SYG have in mind for UN presence in Laos? We would be interested in SYG's detailed views. In this connection, since terms of reference, to extent they spelled out, will presumably appear in letter circulated to SC members by SYG, US would wish see draft letter before circulated. We believe terms of reference should be in terms of observation and reporting, not in terms negotiation and mediation. Does he have Laos' views this regard?

(d) Does SYG have specific individual in mind to represent him there? We assume RLG agreement would be sought before he designates individual to head mission and we would appreciate opportunity make our views known to SYG in this regard.

4. Ambassador Lodge is also requested make our views known to SYG re his and Blickenstaff's activities on basis information in para 4 urtel 405 and Vientiane 1089 repeated USUN 142.[5] You should also firmly clarify erroneous idea SYG may have re Phoui trip. We clearly did not instigate this trip and in fact have sought to discourage it.

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[4] In telegram 1025, October 9, Smith reported that Phoui was not enthusiastic about a regional U.N. representative believing that such a person would not be able to spend adequate time on Lao problems given Cambodian-South Vietnamese and Cambodian-Thai border conflicts. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] In these telegrams, October 12 and 15, respectively, USUN and the Embassy reported attempts by Blickenstaff of the U.N. Secretariat Staff to restrict the activities of the Laos subcommittee and influence its work. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1259 and 751J.00/10–1559)

We leave it to your judgment as to whether it is best to take up all of questions contained this telegram with SYG at one or two meetings.

You should inform SYG that contents of this telegram also constitute US reply to his letters of October 10[6] and 15.[7]

Herter

[6] Letter from Hammarskjöld to Herter, October 10. (*Ibid.*, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Laos 1957–1961)

[7] In this letter, which Hammarskjöld described as an addendum to his October 10 letter, he reported that the Malayan Foreign Minister approved of the concept of a U.N. presence in Laos. (*Ibid.*)

283. Editorial Note

On October 22, Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone, Foreign Minister Khamphan Panya, Secretary of State for Defense Phoumi Nosavan, and Ambassador-designate Nouphat Chounramany visited Washington for an unofficial visit. The Prime Minister and his party had originally planned to go to New York to meet with Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, but they changed itinerary at the last minute because of Hammarskjöld's concern that their presence in New York would be counterproductive. Members of the Lao delegation had extensive discussions with U.S. officials and Phoui received medical treatment at Walter Reed Hospital. The visit was cut short by the death of King Sisavang Vong on October 29. Phoui returned to Laos on October 30 for the funeral and to report to his new sovereign, Crown Prince Savang Vatthana. Phoui had planned to make a courtesy call on President Eisenhower and meet with Secretary Herter, but the meetings were cancelled. Extensive documentation on the abbreviated visit is included in the microfiche supplement.

284. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 2, 1959—7:24 p.m.

970. Your 1207.[2] During Washington visit Colonel Phoumi had long conversation with Department officer[3] in which among other things he stressed he did not differ with Ambassador Smith on need preserve constitutional parliamentary regime. As interpreted by him however regime should be a "democratic dirigee" since masses too ignorant for normal democracy. To achieve this he felt all that was necessary was to amend electoral law in order to control election. He had in fact offered Phoui to conduct elections and if permitted do so guaranteed Prime Minister a tame Assembly.

Comment: Clearly idea of need for strong executive firmly planted in CDNI. While this idea probably reflects realistic assessment of situation in Laos at present, nevertheless Department agrees with you that CDNI will bear watching to insure it does not kick over all constitutional traces and establish quasi dictatorial regime.

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10-2959. Confidential. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by Usher, and approved by Anderson. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1207, October 29, the Embassy reported that there was increased attention in Lao political circles to constitutional reform now that the National Assembly was nearing expiration of its term. The Embassy warned: "Problem is essentially to restrain CDNI from impetuous short-cuts which could wreck Phoui's plans to carry out necessary constitutional reform in moderate terms after adequate preparations and under proper circumstances." (*Ibid.*)

[3] No other record of this conversation has been found.

285. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 5, 1959—1:53 p.m.

991. Suddenness of Phoui's departure deprived Department of opportunity for full and frank discussion with him and his party, for which careful preparation had been made. Parsons had intended to present to Phoui and Khampan Panya together a rather full exposition of our concept of those factors which vitally bear on posture we believe Laos should in its own best interest try to maintain.

You should seek early opportunity to talk to Phoui preferably in presence of Khamphan Panya (because of suspicion which seems to exist between them) and tell him that Department had asked you to outline in considerable detail some of subjects which would have been discussed with him here had not circumstances prevented. Such a session with him now appears of even greater importance in view of proposed early visit of Secretary General UN. This will be an occasion when Phoui will have full opportunity to set forth to very important ears many of the principles basic to the posture of Laos at this critical juncture.

The fundamental starting point in our concept is Laos' primary needs for peace, security, stability and unity. Factors which contribute to the achievement of these goals may be divided into external and internal, but all due attention to them is, in our opinion, very important if Laos is to receive that measure of sympathy and support from its friends, of whom we believe we head the list, and to parry the thrusts from others in the international family who may not be always sympathetic with the problems which the leaders of Laos face.

External

1. The United Nations should continue to provide a mechanism whereby world opinion favorable to the cause of Laos can be quickly marshaled. We believe that actions this past summer, and the extraordinary steps which the UN has taken favorable to the interests of Laos, should engender confidence in the UN and the SYG, and urge RLG to provide an atmosphere making it as easy as possible for the UN to continue to provide this vital assistance.

2. SEATO had made manifest its readiness to intervene if necessary. Evidence of this support, however, should remain in the background, not allowing SEATO support in any way to embarrass current

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–559. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Steeves and Chapman and approved by SEA (Usher and Anderson), Wilcox, and Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Bangkok, London, Paris, and USUN.

efforts of UN representatives. Phoui is, of course, fully aware of the continuing strong support of the US to the RLG, both directly and through the medium of these two organizations, resulting in maximum support for Lao interests. It is imperative that any contemplated resort to SEATO be coordinated in advance, especially with the US, if risk of unexpected or unfavorable developments from Lao viewpoint is to be avoided. We would like firm assurances on this.

3. It is highly important that Laos maintain the sympathy and support of Asian countries, such as India, as well as friendly signatories of the Geneva Agreement. Laos should therefore make it known from time to time that its policy is one bespeaking neutrality. Statements can be recast along lines Feb. 17 [*11*], 1959 Declaration.[2] While Laos has been correct in our opinion in maintaining its position on the Geneva Agreement, it is important in its actions not to appear to violate the spirit of that accord. Phoui's statement in Paris seems to have been very appropriate.

4. The United States is prepared to continue giving Laos aid subject of course to Congressional limitations and bearing in mind the likelihood there will be a decline in our worldwide aid programs. Lao needs and requirements are large. Therefore in view of the increasing limitations imposed on United States aid, RLG should seek aid from other friendly powers and from the UN. It should also be mindful of factors bearing on US Congressional and popular attitudes toward aid.

5. While showing appropriate determination to protect their country and using their full resources vigorously to repel any intrusion, Lao should continually make it crystal clear that they have no ambition but to live at peace avoiding provocation and anything that could be interpreted by their neighbors as inflammatory.

Internal

6. Internal unity must be the watchword. Political stability can only be assured by close, loyal cooperation among anti-Communist elements represented by the RLP, CDNI and the Army. We have been most encouraged by the unity displayed during the crisis and hope it will be maintained at all costs. Bickering over nonessentials or allowing unimportant issues to bring about political division or actions by any elements not motivated by dedication to national survival could have very damaging effect on Laos' position abroad and ability its friends to help.

7. We recognize that strong leadership must take firm stands and utilize some extraordinary means during times of crisis to maintain security. However the maintenance of constitutional and parliamentary principles must not be cavalierly ignored but should continue to

[2] See footnote 2, Document 213.

be honored. The abandonment of these principles could open the way to an uncharted future which might encourage an adventurous course of government by decree, with no limitations on its power.

8. This may be an appropriate point at which to discuss the trials of the dissident leaders. While RLG are certainly right in taking measures to prevent disloyal sabotage from within, actions of this nature need to be carefully timed so as not to react unfavorably on cause of Laos in the outside world and, when such action is taken, should be done with utmost regard for proper procedures of law and rights of the accused. We have been disturbed for instance by reports that the defense counsel has not had proper opportunity to interview their clients. In taking strong action of this nature on what would seem to be purely domestic issues, repercussions in outside world can not be ignored.

9. Minorities within Laos, as recent events have proved, live in crucial areas and special efforts should be put forward to orient them toward RLG, taking measures to attract their loyalty, if the nation is to be preserved. Attitudes and action, not intentions or vague planning, are key to progress in this field.

10. Training of FAL should proceed as rapidly as possible in order to render these forces capable of countering purely internal subversion and forcing Vietminh dissidents to the surface and abandoning their intervention.

Conclusion

You may in your discretion tell Phoui privately that we continue to have full confidence in him. He raised the question at the airport as to whether or not he might resign in view of King's death. We see no constitutional reason why he should do so and, in view of great contribution he has made and is making, we believe he should hold on to helm. We are naturally concerned about Phoui's health and would like to be helpful in every possible way. (FYI. We are obtaining medical record from Walter Reed and plan to consult Dr. DeVault about it. End FYI. Meanwhile give us your assessment of local American doctor's qualifications for being helpful to Prime Minister.)

Above outline sets forth in rudimentary form much of what we would have liked to say to Phoui here and which we hope you will have opportunity to express. It is to be recognized that this kind of counsel is a little unusual in ordinary international usage, but we believe it may be justified in view of what is at stake, considering conditions in Laos and the special relations which exist between us.

No objection to outlining this concept to King Savang if you so desire.

Herter

286. Editorial Note

On November 5, the U.N. Subcommittee in Laos examining the fighting in the north made its report public. The summary section of the report was based on Lao Government documents and witnesses. The report concluded that, since July 16, military action against Lao Government posts and units in Sam Neua and Phong Saly Provinces had increased, culminating in the heaviest fighting between August 30 and September 15. After September 15, the subcommittee stated that the conflict regressed. While military action was of different scope and magnitude throughout the entire period, the subcommittee characterized it as a guerrilla war, but with a centralized coordination. Almost all the witnesses interviewed by the subcommittee stated that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam supported the dissident elements, composed of disaffected Pathet Lao and sections of frontier minority people. The subcommittee stated that the "opposing side" offered it no information or witnesses. (*Report of the Sub-Committee Under Resolution of 7 September 1959*, U.N. doc. S/4236)

287. Memorandum for the Record[1]

Vientiane, November 6, 1959.

SUBJECT

The problem of constitutional reform in Laos [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]

1. The question of amending the Laos constitution to prolong the legal mandate of the present National Assembly for an additional year beyond 25 December 1959 is inextricable from a host of complex corollary issues in Laos, including those of political evolution, factional and personal political rivalries, the question of "modified democracy" and the political role of the King, and the ever present threat of internal subversion. At the center of this vortex is the Committee to Defend the National Interests (CDNI) and the contentious policies this [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] group is currently following.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.03/11–659. Secret. The source text contains no indication who drafted this memorandum. Handwritten by the same hand that wrote the file number is the phrase: "Vientiane From-Repa."

2. *Present Situation*

In January 1959 a "De Gaulle-type" power move spearheaded by the Lao Army and the CDNI persuaded the National Assembly to vote special powers to Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone for a period of twelve months. Phoui was empowered to constitute a completely new cabinet if he so desired, to govern without reference to the National Assembly, to prepare the way for constitutional reforms (including a revamping of the electoral law) and generally to take extraordinary measures to check Communist subversion throughout Laos, with the expressed hope that through the application of special powers, non Communist political factions would acquire a more solid foundation for contesting the general elections with the Communist-front Neo Lao Hak Sat. Unresolved then was what would happen at the termination of the special powers. The National Assembly's popular mandate of four years expires in December 1959. (Parenthetically, it should be noted that a constitutional provision fixing the deputies' terms at *five* years was adopted after the election of the present Assembly and applies only to future Assembly elections.) According to the present constitution general elections have to be scheduled either late in 1959 or early in 1960.

3. In recent months—and particularly since the outbreak in July 1959 of Pathet Lao/NLHS guerrilla warfare in many sectors throughout Laos—a certain sentiment has developed against scheduling general elections until late in 1960 out of conviction that non Communist political elements would *not* be prepared to contest the elections successfully until that time. This sentiment is found principally among deputies of the non Communist majority party in the National Assembly, the Lao Hom Lao, who of course have a vested interest in a prolongation of the life of the current Assembly. Lao Hom Lao sentiment, however, is not unanimous on this score. Some deputies fear a popular reaction against such a prolongation and are resigned to facing the electorate early in 1960. The leadership of the Lao Hom Lao, including Katay Don Sasorith and Phoui Sananikone, favor not only a prolongation of the Assembly term to five years, but equally another twelve month extension of Phoui's special powers. If the Assembly's term is to be extended this probably will have to be accomplished through a constitutional amendment. Phoui favors this, as does the Ambassador, who also regards an extension of Phoui's special powers as essential.

4. The cabinet, however, is sharply split on the issue, with CDNI ministers opposed to a prolongation of the Assembly mandate. Out of this cabinet dispute a decision was reached to present the question to the Regent (now King) for determination. The Regent, however, kicked it back to the cabinet with the admonition that it was the cabinet's responsibility to make a firm recommendation for the Re-

gent's approval. He implied that he would concur in the convening of a National Congress to amend the constitution to permit a prolongation of the current Assembly's mandate if this is the recommendation made to him, and if the manner suggested for extending the mandate is not against the grain of the constitution. At this moment the cabinet remains divided on the issue.

5. *The CDNI position*

The entire "reform *matière*" of the CDNI is directed against the political excesses permitted under the Lao brand of parliamentary democracy and the personal abuse of their privileged position for self aggrandizement on the part of the deputies in the Assembly. CDNI leaders reason that vast political changes have occurred since this Assembly's election in 1955 and that the Assembly's mandate should not be extended without again facing the electorate. They are convinced that a large number of the deputies have lost popular favor, could never be reelected, and deserve political retirement. This opposition to extending the Assembly's mandate is coupled with an equally firm conviction on their part that parliamentary democracy, as Laos had known it, is totally unsuited to the level of political sophistication in the country and that some form of "modified democracy" must come about. Military leaders of the CDNI have been deeply impressed by recent events in Pakistan, Burma, Thailand and France where the army was instrumental either in establishing or strongly influencing the installation of governments with vastly strengthened executive powers at the expense of the legislatures. France in particular served as a useful precedent and guideline for the January 1959 power move in Laos. Again in emulation of De Gaulle's constitutional revisions which curbed the excesses of parliamentary democracy in France, the CDNI now looks to sharp constitutional revisions in Laos to accomplish a similar objective. Laos has no De Gaulle, but the CDNI draws a parallel between De Gaulle and successor-King Savang Vatthana, who with the Lao Army and the civilian CDNI leaders forms a political triumvirate latently, and sometimes openly, opposed to Phoui and the elder politicians who comprise the Lao Hom Lao.

6. The CDNI would let the Assembly's mandate end on schedule in December 1959, after a revised constitution was adopted which placed greater executive and legislative power in the hands of the King. Between the end of the Assembly's mandate and the call for general elections a government of "technicians," possibly directed by the King himself, would govern. It is a lack of clarity in the CDNI view as to when general elections would be called by such a government of "technicians" which has created a considerable amount of uneasiness over CDNI ultimate objectives. Linking this with the CDNI momentum for sharp constitutional revisions in favor of increased power for the King, the Ambassador has drawn the conclusion that the CDNI is

bent on instituting an authoritarian regime in Laos which would kick over all traces of constitutionality and severely cripple democratic processes in Laos. The Ambassador is convinced that any such potential threat must be forestalled and that this can be done only by "freezing" the present situation for another year—that is, extending the Assembly's mandate, renewing Phoui's special powers and permitting more time to be bought for more deliberate constitutional changes and the projection of general elections when non Communist political factions would be better prepared to go to the electorate.

[*5 paragraphs (2 pages of source text) not declassified*]

12. *The CDNI record*

There can be no question that the CDNI has become the political pressure group on the RLG as originally envisaged. In cementing a firm alliance with the leaders of the Army and the King the civilian CDNI leaders have acquired a position of considerable political power, which is currently manifested through CDNI occupancy of half the ministerial portfolios in the RLG. The CDNI played a key role in the adoption of monetary reform and in straightening out the complex morass of RLG finances; it launched an *assassinissement* campaign for rooting out the most corrupt civil servants in the RLG hierarchy; and most important, through its leaders' occupancy of key ministries, has provided a very favorable atmosphere for United States agencies to inaugurate programs for coping with subversion and other serious problems confronting Laos—a situation which never prevailed in preceding Lao governments. Its strengths as an organization have, however, contributed to deep internal political divisions. The CDNI has become suspect in the eyes of the Lao Hom Lao, who look upon it as a greater threat to their acquired political positions than the Neo Lao Hak Sat—which appears a more distant threat to them.

13. *The overall problem for United States*

The CDNI has remained convinced that extensive alterations in the constitutional-governmental framework are essential. These convictions are buttressed by the following factors:

A. CDNI disappointment over Phoui's exercise of his special powers mandate; the CDNI points to Phoui's failure to strengthen his cabinet as he was authorized and his disinclination to provide strong leadership;

B. King Savang's desire to play a more decisive role in the government, particularly in the direction of RLG foreign policies;

C. Coolness between King Savang and Phoui/Lao Hom Lao elder politicians;

D. Army dissatisfaction with old guard civilian leadership and sympathy with the political roles acquired by the military in Pakistan, Burma, etc.

E. The cumulative effect of Phoui's agile political maneuvering of one faction against another—the CDNI is convinced that Phoui's preoccupation with such maneuvering is motivated more by a desire to retain political power than by a dedicated effort to bring all non Communist factions together under his leadership.

F. The CDNI clearly regards itself as the wave of the future in Laos and is convinced that the expansion of its political power should be accelerated.

14. On their part Phoui and the Lao Hom Lao are fearful that the end of the current Assembly's mandate in December, sharp constitutional revisions strengthening the Crown at the expense of the Assembly and new elections within such a revised constitutional framework would lead to their early forced political retirement. Many of the Lao Hom Lao regard CDNI pressures for instituting "modified democracy" as a smokescreen for forcing the Lao Hom Lao out of politics. The CDNI suspects the willing acceptance of the necessity for modified democracy by certain Lao Hom Lao as inspired principally by a determination to engineer constitutional revisions which would further consolidate Lao Hom Lao bases of political power. Interestingly enough there is widespread acceptance on the part of the most responsible leaders in both the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao that some form of modified democracy must be instituted. As the Embassy has recently noted, however, differences occur in moving from exhortation to realization.

15. In this atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust between the CDNI and Lao Hom Lao it is perhaps superfluous to repeat the long-held Department of State [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] view that the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao must coalesce their efforts into a united approach to the problems confronting Laos. While this remains as true as ever the problem of how the RLG is to be organized within a constitutional framework has generated such heated passions in Laos as to transcend this general guideline. [*6 lines of source text not declassified*] The Laos Desk shares the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] conviction that evolutionary forces at work in Laos and the demonstrated inability of the Lao version of parliamentary democracy to cope effectively with the backwardness of Laos may make mandatory certain constitutional changes to strengthen the hand of the Crown at the expense of the Assembly. The CDNI can neither be encouraged nor discouraged in their convictions without clearer expression of United States policy on these questions. [*5½ lines of source text not declassified*] One thing is certain: the convictions of the CDNI are deep seated and not easily dissuaded. They would be impressed, however, by a clear enunciation of United States policy which comes to grips with the problems such as the merits of

"modified democracy" for Laos, which to them are paramount in considering how Laos is to combat effectively the subversion menacing its independence.

16. *Alternative courses of action*

A. *Termination [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] support of the CDNI*

Despite the deep seated differences between the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao, [2½ *lines of source text not declassified*] support of the CDNI *as a popular movement eschewing partisan political rivalry with the Lao Hom Lao* would be counterproductive. To place this support on a sacrificial alter would ignore the basic situation of fact: viz., the CDNI has become a powerful political element which will continue in business irrespective of the support or absence of support it receives [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] United States. There is no question, however, that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] support would dull the enthusiasm of certain CDNI leaders to continue to expose themselves in pushing anti-Communist measures in Laos. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in the face of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] support they would doubtless conclude that they had been set adrift and thereafter formulate their own policies irrespective of United States viewpoint. We can, however, even in the continuation [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] CDNI support, effectively modify the terms of reference of this support.

1. We are in a position to try to build into the CDNI leadership greater control factors which would make the CDNI more responsive [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] guidance within the framework of Department of State policy, if this is clearly enunciated.

2. We can continue to concentrate the bulk of our efforts on the buildup of the CDNI organizational mechanism and the strengthening of its capacities to rally popular support to the anti-Communist, anti-Neo Lao Hak Sat pro Royal Government cause—without creating in the minds of CDNI leaders a conviction that this kind of support automatically carries [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] approbation of extremist CDNI policies, or any policies for that matter which are at variance with a clearly delineated Department of State policy treating the broad questions of "modified democracy," etc. The enunciation of these policies/viewpoints to the CDNI should be left to the Ambassador [*1 line of source text not declassified*]. But to do this we must have a clarification of Department of State policy on the following questions which are at the center of CDNI/Lao Hom Lao controversy.

B. *The timing of general elections*

Whether general elections are to be held in early 1960 or at the end of 1960 is crucial to the corollary issues of the extension of the present Assembly's mandate and constitutional reforms. Certain of the

CDNI and Lao Hom Lao leaders are persuaded that elections should be held in early 1960 and that with a unified non-Communist candidate slate the outcome would be highly favorable to them. If this view prevailed there would be no necessity for extending the present Assembly's mandate. Since only a few extremists in the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao so belittle elections as to be unconcerned over their timing, it is imperative that a decision be reached on the timing which reflects the best available estimate of the popular voting mood. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]

C. *Alternative courses prior to elections*

If the best available estimate for the timing of elections is at the end of 1960 the question then to be resolved is the nature of the RLG's composition up to that date. The alternatives are either to extend the present Assembly's mandate or else let their mandate run its natural course and thereafter endorse a provisional government (either as presently constituted or modified with cabinet changes) to rule without benefit of the Assembly until elections are held. The latter would, of course, be the greater departure from constitutionality, unless constitutional changes were made immediately to incorporate extraordinary procedures for such rule without reference to the Assembly. We are actually confronted here more with the facade of constitutional procedures than with substance, since even an extension of the present Assembly's mandate for one year, coupled with a twelve month renewal of Phoui's special powers, would differ little in actual practice from the absence of an Assembly mandate—under special powers the Assembly remains in a state of suspended animation. This is a decision for Department of State. The argument for retention of even this facade is, however, compelling if elections are not to be held until the end of 1960.

D. *The substance and timing of constitutional revisions*

If all disinterested parties agree that the concept of modified democracy is a valid one for Laos, then are we not faced more with a technical question of the substance of constitutional revisions rather than one of the questionable motivations of those advocating these revisions? If we are, the alternatives to be considered center on the kind of power balance which should be retained between the Crown and the Assembly. This can be subjected to cold scrutiny divorced from the heated passions which have, to this date, clouded this basic issue. [*18 lines of source text not declassified*]

17. *Conclusion*

Calm reason can prevail in this situation of complex political factors. If a clarification and delineation of Department of State policy can be obtained on the issues noted above and the alternative courses available to resolve them there is every reason to believe that both the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao would respond in a cooperative vein to a

confrontation by the Ambassador presenting in detail Department of State views on the entirety of these interrelated political problems. If, on the other hand, a decision is reached to sweep these problems under the rug in an attempt to ignore their existence, then in all candor we must accept a continuation and exacerbation of the differences which separate the CDNI and the Lao Hom Lao—with governmental paralysis in Laos the inevitable result.

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288. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, November 10, 1959.

SUBJECT

Vientiane's Telegram No. 1300, November 8, 1959[2] on the U.S. Effort in Laos

Following is a summary of the subject telegram which is divided into three parts: I. the USOM Director's first report to the Director of ICA; II. the Ambassador's assessment of recent political developments; and III. the joint recommendations of the Ambassador and the USOM Director.

I. USOM Director's Report

The new USOM Director, John Tobler, arrived in Vientiane six weeks ago. He is fully convinced that, unless an all-out fully-coordinated U.S. effort is made in the near future, the chances are slim that Laos will survive as an independent country. He states that the central government has in effect lost control over wide areas of the country and that travel outside metropolitan areas by both Lao and Americans is severely restricted. He attributes the failure of the U.S. program to the multiplicity of uncoordinated approaches to the many problems—[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Defense with more flexibility than USOM in emergency situations have resorted to unconventional approaches, forging ahead in different directions and undercut-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1059. Top Secret. Drafted by Erikson and cleared by Anderson, Usher, and Steeves. Transmitted to Herter under cover of a brief memorandum by Parsons, November 10, in which the Assistant Secretary informed Herter: "I believe I should express the early opinion that much of this report should be treated with reserve although we agree that the situation in Laos is indeed serious." Herter initialed this covering memorandum.

[2] Included in the microfiche supplement. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–859)

ting and undermining USOM, which must operate on a conventional basis requiring full accountability. He summarizes our program in Laos as an appalling example of programming for failure.

II. Political Situation

The Ambassador recounts the highlights of Phoui's tenure as Prime Minister, and contrasts the reasonably sanguine outlook of last January with that of today. He states Phoui has not felt in a position to utilize his full powers nor has he been successful in carrying out his program which has virtually come to a halt. He attributes this primarily to the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] CDNI's obstructionist tactics, as well as to the opposition of the still politically influential Katay don Sasorith and Bong Souvannavong and the ineffectiveness of certain cabinet members.

III. Joint Recommendations

A. *Political.* We should prepare the U.S. public for the very real possibility of failure in Laos by emphasizing the degree of insecurity that has developed. At the same time we should (1) make it clear to Phoui and the CDNI that there is no dichotomy in U.S. policy and that the U.S. Government continues to support Phoui fully and has no intention of supporting an unconstitutional authoritarian government established under CDNI control by coup or royal decree, and (2) make it clear to Phoui that he must meet the obligations implicit in his full powers; unless he does, we can not justify continuation of support at present levels.

B. *Economic.* Special supplementary funds should be appropriated for road building, USOM should be effectively staffed, competitive programs of other agencies should cease or be phased out, and an attempt should be made to enlist the support of other free world sources of aid.

289. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 11, 1959—5:11 p.m.

1037. For Ambassador from Parsons. Ref. Embtel 1293.[2] In view Hammarskjold's imminent arrival Vientiane I am sending this partial response reftel although on uncoordinated basis, today being a holiday.

There has been evidence over some months that Hammarskjold has been concerned that U.S. policy and activities in SEA have suffered from lack coordination and are unduly influenced by Military and Intelligence Agencies. There has also been indications from several posts that certain French officials have not been averse to undercutting U.S. by spreading reports that our Intelligence operates independently of Department. We have endeavored at every opportunity correct such misconceptions.

Reftel indicates this subject has been discussed rather frankly with British, French and Indian Ambassadors in Vientiane in effort convince them no such dichotomy exists.[3] I hope fact that this is current topic in Vientiane will not somehow serve confirm Hammarskjold's suspicions. I am sure you will lose no opportunity to try and convince him that U.S. policy and action fully unified under you as Ambassador. In so doing I hope you will put emphasis on fact that U.S. supports legitimate government of country, constantly emphasizing need for national unity at time of crisis and, far from supporting one non-Communist element to detriment of other non-Communist elements, strives play correct role in position of great responsibility which U.S. necessarily has by reason of budgetary support and other aid. I am also sure you will be careful not to give him or anyone else notion we support one or another element as means influencing internal political

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 611.51J/11–1159. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Parsons, cleared by Anderson, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1293, November 6, Smith reported a long conversation he had with Phoui on November 3. Phoui was "profoundly disheartened" over his reception in Washington during his trip and was fearful that the United States was preparing to sell Laos down the river, to paraphrase the cable. Smith suggested that additional U.S. "moral and material assistance" would be required to allow Phoui to resist certain CDNI effort to undermine him. (*Ibid.*, 033.51J11/11–659; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] This reference to telegram 1293 from Vientiane is in error; the reference should be to telegram 1307 from Vientiane, November 9. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–959; included in the microfiche supplement)

situation. We try instead influence all such elements pull together under RLG. Obvious delicacy this whole subject requires extreme caution particularly at this time.

Herter

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290. Memorandum From the Officer in Charge of Laos Affairs (Chapman) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson)[1]

Washington, November 13, 1959.

SUBJECT

Internal Political Problems in Laos

In recent telegrams,[2] Ambassador Smith has focused his attention on the Phoui–CDNI differences and has referred to a number of factors and issues arising from and causing these differences. In order to arrive at a clear understanding of the situation, I have listed below, in brief, the principal factors and issues which, taken together, form the present complex of political problems in Laos.

Factors in the Situation

1. *The King:* As Prince, Savang Vathana developed an emotional dislike to the present Assembly and its deputies and would have been glad to be rid of them. He also displayed an increasing interest in directing the affairs of the country. Perhaps because of both his dislike for the Assembly and his interest in the country's future and clearly because of his long attachment to the Army, he became one of the staunch supporters of the CDNI. While it is too early to tell, it should be presumed that he would maintain these attitudes now that he is King, and in this capacity he will have a greater influence on the situation.

2. *Phoui:* Phoui has always remained a party man, realizing that the basis of his political strength resides in the Lao Hom Lao. His ability lies principally in tactical maneuvering among groups and individuals, but he has not displayed the type of energetic leadership

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1359. Top Secret.

[2] Telegrams 1293, November 6; 1300, November 8; and 1307, November 9. (*Ibid.*, 033.51J11/11–659, 751J.00/11–859, and 751J.00/11–959, respectively; all included in the microfiche supplement)

which the situation requires. At the same time, he is the only man of sound judgment and amenable to our view who at present can unite under him all the anti-Communist factions in the country. He has proven himself a true friend of the U.S., and has generally sought our advice on all major issues and consistently followed our suggestions. His Government has faced and resolved some major problems confronting Laos, i.e., monetary reform, stability of government, and training the Army.

3. *CDNI:* The CDNI comprises an elite of the younger civilian and military Lao. They will in all probability furnish many of the leaders of tomorrow. They have [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] created a new public spirit in Laos. They are generally patriotic, pro-U.S. and anti-Communist and share the King's distaste for deputies. It must be recognized that on certain issues CDNI members have strong feelings not easily swayed by reason. However, they are still Lao in that they are not well organized, lack energy, and their judgment is often not sound. They tend to take their wishes for granted. It may be questioned whether they could be successful at the polls and their power resides principally in the support of the King, key army officers [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

4. *Lao Hom Lao:* The LHL has never succeeded in welding itself into a real political party. It is rather a grouping of individual Parliamentarians. It has been rather discredited by the past activities of its members who have been involved in the corruption stemming from our aid program and who have been more interested in personal gain than in the country's welfare. Nevertheless, the LHL deputies were elected in generally fair elections and many of them are representatives of their region. The more able members have in the past year shown considerable irritation and frustration at the evidently growing power of the CDNI which they feel is a direct threat to their positions. Friction between the LHL and the CDNI cannot probably be wholly eliminated; we can only seek to reduce it to the minimum.

5. *The Army:* While there are factions within the Army, it is probable that the great majority of officers would remain loyal to the King, and the great majority of the young officers, many in key positions, are affiliated to or at least sympathetic with the CDNI. Since the spring of 1958, when the Army was called to participate in the election campaign, certain officers had become increasingly interested in politics. Their interest has been manifested by their inclusion in the Cabinet since August 1958. Officers in general share the King's and the CDNI's attitude toward the Assembly.

[*Numbered paragraph 6 (7½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

Issues

1. *Extension of the Mandate of the Assembly:* The Assembly mandate terminates on December 25, 1959. Phoui proposes to convene a National Congress to vote a constitutional law to extend the Assembly's mandate by one year. The CDNI prefers to have the Assembly dissolved in accordance with the Constitution. Most probably, Phoui basically considers he owes a debt to his Lao Hom Lao colleagues while the CDNI believes its position will be strengthened with the dissolution of the Assembly.

2. *Timing of the Elections:* With the Assembly mandate extended by one year, Phoui would like to have elections held in December 1960. He argues that a campaign lasts three months, that there has been no time to prepare for elections now and that anti-Communist elements are not in a position to make a good showing at present while, given another year, the Government could, through various village aid programs, improve its electoral position. The CDNI considers that once the Assembly has been dissolved, the King should appoint a government which would carry on until elections could be held at a more propitious time.

Neither Phoui nor the CDNI appear to have taken into consideration the security situation existing in the country. Mention is made in certain telegrams that the Government has lost control over important areas. It may be wondered, therefore, how elections could be held under these circumstances. Furthermore, if an electoral campaign were to get under way in the near future, it may be feared that the CDNI and LHL would split and the Government's entire energies would be devoted to this campaign, creating a dangerous void of authority at a time when the country is seriously threatened.

We have just received a copy of the new electoral law which provides, among the principal changes, that elections will be held in two stages and deputies will be elected on the basis of Muong constituencies rather than provinces. These two modifications are aimed at giving anti-Communist candidates an advantage over their opponents. We are now studying this law to ensure that it serves its purpose.

3. *Modification of the Constitution:* The first point in Phoui's "action program" which he presented to the Assembly in January 1959 in requesting special powers was a proposal to create a constitutional commission to study amending the Constitution. A constitutional commission was formed but we have no clear information regarding the results of its work. The CDNI is now strongly favoring what they term a "granted" constitution which, if I understand it correctly, would be a document issued by royal decree. It would provide for a very much enlarged role for the King and for strictly limiting the powers of the Assembly. Last spring Phoui also favored a strengthen-

ing of the Executive as against the Legislative but never spelled out his ideas in precise form. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] a new constitution devised by Joubert, a French lawyer in Vientiane, which, as I understand it, practically eliminates the Assembly as a political factor and places the reality of power in the hands of the King. This constitution apparently reflects the opinion held by many Lao, particularly the CDNI, that Laos needs a constitution along De Gaullist lines.

The working level of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the Department believe that it is preferable to start from the present constitution and amend it as necessary rather than throwing it away and starting with a brand new text.

4. *U.S. Aid:* Grafted onto these political problems and rendering them more acute is the question of our aid program, its composition, magnitude, and implementation. There is, I believe, a growing frustration among the Lao at the apparent lack of progress their country is making. Phoui believes that a larger, more dynamic program would strengthen his position as proof of U.S. support for himself as Prime Minister, while the CDNI accuses Phoui of having failed to give the necessary leadership to make the most out of the aid program. On the U.S. side, we have found it extremely difficult to establish a USOM of sufficient size and quality to implement effectively our aid to Laos. Therefore, until ICA could do so and in view of the emergencies of the past few years, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] PEO have been requested to carry out crash programs which by their very nature carry unfortunate consequences. The situation in Laos requires both long-term projects, such as roads, to give the country the necessary basis for its future development, and short-term projects, such as village aid, to make tangible the benefits of the central government to the outlying areas of the country. Recognizing the need for both types of projects, the problem is one of coordination in the field.

291. Memorandum From the Officer in Charge of Economic Affairs (Cleveland) to the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson)[1]

Washington, November 13, 1959.

SUBJECT

Acceleration of the Aid Program in Laos

I. Introduction

The bulk of the funds in the Laos Aid Program has been used to support the Lao Armed Forces and the Lao National Police. The relatively small amount devoted to economic purposes has been distributed among many projects in all segments of the economy with special emphasis on the improvement of transportation facilities, particularly roads. Almost without exception, none of the projects has been implemented rapidly or efficiently enough to gain significant political impact; on the contrary, most have been delayed so long that a negative reaction has set in. Difficulties encountered in carrying out an effective program have been well aired in the Sessions Report, the ICA Evaluation Report, the GAO Report, and the Report of the Hardy Subcommittee on Government Operations. In spite of all these past reports on the weakness of the operation in Laos, it is doubtful that even today we can really move forward fast enough to produce early significant visible results.

II. The Problem

What can be done in Washington and in the field to accelerate the aid program?

III. Considerations

A. *Funds* While funds available for economic projects have been relatively limited, this has by no means been a major inhibiting factor in program execution. There has been a growing pipeline of unspent project funds.

B. *Personnel* Failure to staff the US Operations Mission in Laos with competent and qualified personnel has been the chief handicap in the accomplishment of an effective aid program. In spite of the fact that Laos has world-wide priority for ICA personnel staffing, recent

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1359. Confidential. Drafted by Erikson.

cables from the new USOM Director indicate that ICA simply is not able to provide the Mission with a full staff of professionally and linguistically qualified personnel.

C. *Procedures* Cumbersome ICA procedures are blamed in certain cases for delays involved in the execution of the aid program, e.g., USOM waited from March until October simply for concurrence in a road alignment. However, in cases where normal procedural requirements have been waived, projects have fared little better (e.g., Vientiane power plant, an "impact" project in 1956—design and construction of a distribution system for the plant have not yet been started). The history of waiving normal procurement and contracting procedures has not been such as to encourage ICA to make future expectations unless over-riding advantages are clearly apparent.

D. *Composition of the Aid Program* While the Lao program does place special emphasis on roads, and to a lesser extent on education, it also contains numerous projects in agriculture, public health, public administration, etc., some of which are only being partly implemented owing to lack of personnel. This tends to result in a dissipation of the energies of USOM thinly over a variety of unsuccessful projects rather than concentration on a few well-conceived high priority projects.

Conclusions

1. In view of the ICA's difficulties in personnel recruitment, the restrictive procedures imposed by legislation, the peculiar nature of the Lao problem, and past experience in the operation of the program, it is not likely that a conventional aid program will produce the desired results even if more funds were available.

Recommendations

1. In line with the Prime Minister's expressed desires, drop all projects which we cannot effectively carry out and concentrate only on those which can really produce results. The chief determinant as to retention of a project should be the availability of qualified personnel.

2. Be prepared to solicit third countries or UN assistance in those fields from which the US withdraws. In the first instance this should be discussed with the French.

3. Projects should be examined at a high level to determine where waivers of normal ICA procedures would be of substantial benefit. Such waivers should be granted expeditiously.

4. In view of the expressed wish of the RLG and the overall benefits obtainable, the road program[2] should be the principal area of

[2] Anderson wrote the following footnote in the source text at this point: "We have just completed a good session with Aldrich of BPR, recently returned from Laos. (memo of conversation follows) D.A." The memorandum of conversation has not been found.

concentration; an all out effort should be made to provide funds, staff and equipment to accelerate progress in this field.

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292. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 13, 1959—8:12 p.m.

1051. 1. Given clear and present danger to independence of Laos, Department considers it imperative to maintain stability of government, unity of patriotic elements, continuity of national purpose and direction. Whatever causes instability, division, diversion from overriding security problem directly threatens survival of country. Compared to need of re-establishing security and government's authority throughout country, all else is of small moment. If CDNI and LHL fall to quarreling at this juncture, world will note that patriotic elements have lost sense of national urgency so widely proclaimed during past weeks and little sympathize when victor of quarrel emerges to find countryside lost to rebels.

2. In order to maintain stability, unity and continuity, Department believes national interests of Laos dictate that:

a) Elections be deferred until at least December 1960. Security conditions appear to preclude a campaign this spring and such a campaign would divide CDNI and LHL and dangerously absorb energies of RLG at time when they should be devoted to re-establishing peace and security and gaining loyalty of all villagers.

b) A National Congress be convened to vote year extension of Assembly. Value of formal parliamentary framework even though emptied of substance by special powers resides in fact it does provide political institution to carry out political processes in orderly fashion. Abandonment this framework would lead to confused situation in which groups and individuals would be impelled to jockey for positions. Discord and disunity among patriotic elements would be result.

(c) Congress might also vote amendments to present constitution aimed at giving government greater stability by strengthening Executive and reducing Assembly's powers. Department fully recognizes need for stability as did Phoui when he requested special powers, although it not clear how far Phoui considers shift of power should be carried out. CDNI furthermore has evidently deep-seated understandable feeling on subject though it should realize term "guided democ-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1359. Secret. Drafted by Chapman; cleared with Usher, Anderson, and Steeves; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

racy" carries serious political implications in eyes of world. Department most interested know what precisely Phoui and CDNI have in mind but hopes that while agreeing on principle they not find constitutional change another issue to divide them. In any case Department believes objective can be better achieved by amending present constitution than writing entirely new text which Department understands is being considered. Scrapping constitutions sets dangerous precedent for future.

(d) RLG should continue comprise present groups LHL, CDNI, Army though changes individual members might be effected to strengthen cabinet. We maintain our confidence in Phoui but consider he must exercise his leadership with greater force and clarity, notably by taking CDNI more into his confidence, discussing issues with them and making effort overcome lack of communication between individuals and groups which has plagued Lao political scene. FYI: Your conversations with Phoui give rise to impression here of man who is tired, depressed by number of problems confronting him and using US channels to achieve his purposes. While we consider his health of great importance to enable him carry on his burdens of office and therefore sympathize with present fatigue, we also consider he should be made to face necessity of working directly with CDNI in order promote Lao unity under his leadership. End FYI.

3. You should impart all of above to Phoui, CDNI and if possible to King in manner you consider most effective.[2] In this connection believe you should seek develop even closer personal contacts with CDNI, LHL and King. In order avoid impression of dichotomy in US policy it essential Ambassador act as US spokesman to all factions.

Herter

[2] Smith's discussion with Phoui as instructed is reported in telegram 1383 from Vientiane, November 19. Phoui promised to lay the groundwork for a policy in Laos in accordance with the Department's suggestions. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–1959) In telegram 1416 from Vientiane, November 20, Smith reported a discussion with Phoumi in which he made the same points. While agreeing with the need for stability and continuity in Laos, Phoumi believed that Phoui's present government was ineffectual and suggested formation of a new government with Phoui as its head. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–2059) In telegram 1382 from Vientiane, November 18, Smith reported a discussion with Khamphan Panya in which he made the points as instructed. Khamphan Panya responded that the fault lay not with the CDNI, but the LHL. Smith concluded that the Foreign Minister intended to follow a policy aimed at securing for the CDNI complete political control of Laos. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–1859) These telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

293. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, November 16, 1959.

SUBJECT

Situation in Laos

1. Several recent telegrams from Laos (one of which—No. 1300 of November 8—was summarized in my memorandum of November 10)[2] have focused attention on two major problems of political and economic policy in that country.

Political

2. The political problem revolves around the necessity for action to prolong the constitutional framework of Prime Minister Phoui's coalition government. We support Phoui's view that this should be accomplished by extending for an additional year the legal mandate of the National Assembly, which is due to expire on December 25, 1959, and to extend the special powers which that Assembly granted to Phoui until December 1960. This would provide time for anti-Communist elements to build popular support, and for the implementation of programs to achieve greater economic, social, and military stability.

3. The CDNI, an anti-Communist group of younger better educated men associated closely with the Army and the new King, is an essential component of Phoui's coalition government. However, it is dissatisfied with the caliber of many of the older politicians in Phoui's own LHL party and, as a means of ejecting these politicians, favors the abolition of the National Assembly. Moreover, the CDNI advocates constitutional revisions to strengthen the executive and the establishment of a strong interim Government in December 1959 to hold office until it decides the time is propitious for general elections.

4. On November 3 the Prime Minister told our Ambassador that the CDNI was blocking his programs for resolving the constitutional issue as well as programs for enforcing greater efficiency in Government. He said he feared that use of his authority to overcome this opposition would lead to a CDNI–Army coup [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, Laos. Secret. Drafted by Usher and cleared by SEA and FE.

[2] The November 10 memorandum is printed as Document 288. Regarding telegram 1300, see footnote 2 thereto.

5. However, on November 10, following separate discussions by Phoui and Ambassador Smith with CDNI politicians, Phoui appeared to the Ambassador to be somewhat more confident that he could manage the problem of CDNI opposition.

Economic

6. The Ambassador reports that Phoui is disheartened over what he regards as the meager impact of USOM's economic assistance program. Phoui particularly emphasizes his conviction that a greatly expanded road-building program is imperative if Laos is to be unified in the face of Communist psychological warfare and creeping subversion of the rural population, especially in inaccessible areas.

7. The Ambassador and the new Director of USOM have endorsed Phoui's views and have expressed in strong terms their own views that our aid program has been uncoordinated, slow, and quantitatively inadequate.

Comment

8. Phoui, the Ambassador, and the USOM Director have emphasized their belief that a major cause of these problems is divergence and frequent conflict between the operations of the Embassy and USOM on the one hand and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Defense[3] on the other. Our view here is that, although there may have appeared at times to be divergence in the field, there has not in fact been any divergence of concept in Washington. The solution to this problem is to be sought in removing the appearance (and if need be the reality) of it in Vientiane, primarily by ensuring that the Country Team headed by the Ambassador speaks with one voice.

9. The resolution of Phoui's political problem requires primarily that Phoui be confident of our support. However, such support must be dependent upon his exertion of appropriate leadership to hold his coalition together by maintaining balanced contact with all elements of it. We should not be placed in the position of enforcing Phoui's will, but rather of supporting his leadership. The key problem of enlisting support of the CDNI, the Army and the King for wise constitutional procedures as advocated by Phoui will have to be worked out by frank discussion among them.

10. Pending the anticipated early receipt of specific Country Team recommendations on the aid program, the Department, ICA and the Bureau of Public Roads are moving forward here with the coordination of plans for an accelerated road program based on recommendations

[3] This is the first indication of any dissatisfaction on the Ambassador's part with the Defense program, which he has been strongly supporting. [Footnote in the source text.]

and execution by the BPR. BPR engineers have surveyed the program in Laos, and the Bureau is prepared to move ahead rapidly with plans which should produce substantial results within six months.

11. While recognizing that the situation in Laos is perilous, we consider that the problems described above are manageable. They represent an important aspect of the difficulties that confront us, but have been portrayed in recent telegrams in an overdrawn and somewhat emotional manner. The general line of approach recommended above, together with other actions to improve the capability of the internal security forces, stabilize the currency, gain the support of minority tribes, prolong the UN presence, and broaden the scope of participation by other free world countries in building stability, offers promise of continued progress in strengthening the country against the Communist threat.

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294. Memorandum From the Acting Director of the International Cooperation Administration (Saccio) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon)[1]

Washington, November 20, 1959.

SUBJECT

Evaluation of U.S. Aid Program in Laos

I. Critical Situation In Laos Depicted

Ambassador Smith and USOM Director Tobler in their eight part message of November 9, 1959,[2] express extreme concern over the existing and probable future political, security and economic situation in Laos. They characterize the U.S. aid program to date as grossly inadequate relative to past, present and future requirements, devoid of significant accomplishment, poorly coordinated and heading for failure. The apparently contradictory courses of political policy and action pursued by the Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] toward the existing government are portrayed as destroying the effectiveness of the Phoui regime, undermining U.S. prestige and opening the way to the most dangerous and potentially disastrous course of events concerning the future of the embattled country.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–2059. Secret. A note on the source text indicates that Dillon saw the memorandum.

[2] Reference is to telegram 1300 from Vientiane; see footnote 2, Document 288.

The seriousness of the assessment thus made of the present situation in Laos clearly warrants immediate and intensive review. The following is an examination of the major criticisms submitted, along with proposed corrective measures. Relatively secondary operational and administrative issues raised in the message will be treated in a separate memorandum.[3]

II. The Field's Proposal for Action

The two major criticisms stressed by the cable are the apparently contradictory aspect of our present political policy and the lack of tangible progress in the economic aid program. Much more rapid accomplishment in road construction is proposed as the economic aid prescription which will correct and resolve the urgent problems confronting Laos.

The accelerated road program proposed by the field calls for supplementary allotments of $15 million in FY 1960 and $20 million in FY 1961, compared with presently planned amounts of $3 million for roads in each year. These additions would constitute an approximate 150% increase in annual aid levels for Laos. Construction of roads will, of course, involve heavy future requirements for highway maintenance, and consequently increase the continuing U.S. aid burden in Laos.

The Ambassador urges in effect the completion by June 30, 1961, of the most essential elements of a national road net, a long-range objective accepted both by the Royal Lao Government (RLG) and USOM/Laos since 1957. Completion of the five component road projects under this program would constitute the major segments of such a net connecting previously isolated towns and villages into a coherent communications system. He states that the completed road will furnish evidence of government accomplishment to the population; it will afford the basis for improved security control through greater mobility of army and police forces and improve administrative control by providing lines of communication from the Central Government to the provinces; it will increase distribution facilities between agricultural surplus and deficit areas, commercial centers and the hinterland, and give access to and from areas with natural resources. It will also connect with major ports of entry and enable Laos' fuller participation in international trade. Thus, a vital condition for economic growth, political stability and internal security will have been fulfilled.

Under the $3 million annual program currently projected, no definite completion date has yet been set by USOM/Laos for the several road projects comprising the national network, although it has been

[3] Not found.

hoped that this goal might be realized by the end of FY 1964. For a variety of reasons progress realized to date has been disappointingly slow. However, with the recent arrival of Bureau of Public Roads staff, better performance is anticipated.

III. Critique of Proposal for an Accelerated Program

It is obviously impossible to separate the political, military and economic components of an accelerated road program. The project could clearly make a significant contribution to progress in each of these three spheres.

The dominance of subsistence farming and the absence of agricultural specialization in Laos suggest that a national road net will probably play only a minor economic role for some time to come. An equivalent investment might produce significantly greater dividends if employed in other types of economic development activities.

Undoubtedly the present government would derive political benefit from announcement of such an accelerated road program, particularly in its current political rivalry with the CDNI (Committee for the Defense of the National Interests). However, it is questionable whether the most important political need in Laos at this time is the completion of a road net. Numerous other demands are equally or more deserving of attention. Reports from Laos over the last year have highlighted the political desirability for a more enlightened policy for dealing with tribal minorities, a routing out of corruption in the government, improvements in the administrative performance of key ministers and more harmonious relations within the present cabinet. None of these would appear resolved by an expanded road program.

Moreover, other economic development projects might well have wider appeal and greater public impact, especially in the outlying areas where the RLG has had little contact and thus less public support. Some examples of these are more widely spread, small-scale irrigation dams; wider distribution of already improved strains of rice, poultry and swine; and increased number of sawmills and the refinement of their production, improved public markets and slaughter houses, improved and expanded medical services and facilities, extensive construction of simple sanitary wells, more public schools and teachers and intensified rural self-help activities. Expansion of this type of activity is feasible, despite difficulties encountered in the past.

The Ambassador's high rating of the road proposal as a political measure designed to strengthen the Phoui Government appears to adopt the most expensive possible expedient. A more direct and immediate course would be reducing present conflicts between the Prime

Minister's party and the CDNI/FAL alliance.[4] [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*]

Road development contributes to improved security conditions. Through improved mobility, the effectiveness of any given force is enhanced. However, the communist forces in Laos are concentrated in the northern and southern extremities of the nation, where the proposed priority road net would not reach. The jungle tactics of the communists are not calculated to maximize the security value of road development. Once roads are built, the action might easily be shifted to other areas or the roads and bridges simply destroyed.

While opening the country to development by means of roads undoubtedly will have long-range benefits to Laos, there is little evidence that the proposed accelerated two-year program would rapidly augment Lao economic activity. Furthermore, experience to date in implementing road projects in Laos affords exhaustive evidence of the difficulties confronting effective operations, especially those of a "crash" nature. The failure to achieve more significant progress in this field is due not alone to the incompetence of contractors selected, past poor administration and waste, but also the physical difficulties of road construction attributable to weather, terrain and related conditions. Beyond this are the grave deficiencies in the capabilities and performance of the responsible RLG Ministry of Public Works and questions as to the availability of Lao labor.

Again, question is raised as to whether the time factor, which, in requiring multiplicity of equipment and services, is the most significant element in the cost of the accelerated program, is in fact as vital as is contended by Ambassador Smith. How much political capital would be sacrificed through more gradual completion as long as the road construction objective was effectively publicized?

IV. Recommendations for Alternative Courses of Action

1. Any divergencies [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in interpreting the political position of the U.S. vis-à-vis the RLG should immediately be rectified.

2. Strenuous efforts should be undertaken by all U.S. agencies and Prime Minister Phoui to achieve more harmonious working relations between the two major factions composing the present cabinet.

[4] Within the past few days a less alarming assessment has been received from Ambassador Smith concerning the relations between the Prime Minister's party and the CDNI/FAL alliance. The Ambassador now states that he feels "somewhat reassured as to the possibility of CDNI's eventually being persuaded to cooperate effectively with Phoui on some program satisfactory to U.S." [Footnote in the source text; the quote in the footnote is taken from telegram 1318 from Vientiane, November 11; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1159; included in the microfiche supplement.]

3. More systematic efforts should be made by USIA to publicize within Laos the major U.S. activities in Laos. This may require a more effective informational program in its impact on different segments of the Lao population in order to accomplish the maximum desired political effectiveness.

4. Within the monetary limits of the existing economic project program, there is need for further concentration and intensification of effort. This is especially the case in the fields of agriculture, public health and rural development. A more imaginative and dynamic approach to the problems of rural areas should result in greater impact and produce more tangible evidence of U.S. interest in the welfare of the Lao.

5. Effort should be made to secure greater UN participation in Lao economic development, particularly because of the recent assignment of the Secretary General's personal representative to Vientiane. A coordinated effort should also be made to enlist participation of additional nations in the development of Lao economic potential.

6. The present pattern of making available approximately $3 million per year towards the development of the national road net should be continued, rather than inaugurating an accelerated program. This more modest effort will direct special attention, through BPR staff, to the training of Lao in road construction and especially in maintenance, as well as to improving the organization and functioning of the Lao Government in the public works field.

7. If overriding political considerations really require an accelerated road program, the figures proposed by the Ambassador and the USOM appear unrealistic. Preliminary estimates made by Mr. Chauncey Aldrich of BPR (who recently spent a short period in Laos in connection with the road program) indicate that the maximum acceleration feasible from the technical and administrative viewpoint during the FYs 1960–1963, inclusive, would total approximately $21 million, above the level already approved for FY 1960 and projected for FY 1961, as follows:

FY 1960—$2.5 million (for advance procurement of machinery)
FY 1961—$6.5 million
FY 1962—$6.5 million
FY 1963—$6.5 million

These sums would complete the all-weather rehabilitation of the road from Vientiane to Luang Prabang (400 kms.) in FY 1961 and FY 1962; the rehabilitation of the spur from Luang Prabang to Xieng Khouang (160 kms.) in FY 1963; and the rehabilitation of the road from Vientiane to Ban Cadinh in FY 1963. Funds already available from FY 1960 and prior year programs will finance the road from

Vientiane to Thadeua and most of the road from Ban Cadinh to Pakhinboun. This would represent the most essential elements of the national road net.

The feasibility of such an accelerated program is very largely dependent upon the success of the BPR in improving road construction operations in Laos. BPR staff has only very recently arrived in the country and only 4 of the planned 12 to 16 BPR staff members are in place. It is too early to determine whether this supervisory group can in fact secure the requisite improvements. Pending evaluation of BPR's success, any additional funds for an accelerated program should be retained within the contingency fund rather than considered as firm requirements.

8. The sweeping negative assessment of the accomplishments of project activities made by the USOM Director is not viewed as accurately reflecting the record of accomplishments. Though it is true that developmental projects have been clearly subordinated to overriding security objectives and have of necessity been limited in scope, nonetheless an impressive and heartening variety of accomplishments can be identified. They comprehend solid, if modest, achievements in the major activity sectors of agriculture, public health, education, public administration and rural development. In view of the genuine progress to date, it is felt that the program should not be subjected to sudden and disruptive shifts in emphasis for hoped-for temporary advantage that creates even further imbalances. Rather, it is urged not only that a continuity of support be provided these activities which have been so painfully evolved, often over a period of years, and are now approaching fruition, but also that support can be imaginatively intensified to assure balanced growth.

L.J. Saccio

295. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 21, 1959—6:48 p.m.

1095. For Ambassador from Parsons. Embtel 1300.[2] I am sure you appreciate that comprehensive character reftel made prompt analysis and response quite impossible. While subsequent telegrams back and forth on individual issues have provided you with some of our action and thinking on the many problems you face in Laos, I should like to direct this personal message to reftel.

Complete response your lengthy message even now impossible, therefore treat this as partial and interim reply. Additional telegram treating specific economic and aid questions will follow.[3] In addition personal letter being mailed within few days.[4] Consideration being given to problems you raise by top level of US agencies concerned and these matters will receive continuing intensive attention. On economic aid front Acting ICA Director Saccio planning spend several days Vientiane to review with you and Tobler all the questions that field.

While those of us who have been intimately associated with peculiar problems which Laos presents can fully appreciate frustrations which develop from inability produce desired results, believe it worthwhile observing that lack of complete achievement of goals we have set out to reach is continuing manifestation of complexity over-all problem which Laos presents. We must remember that although conditions in Laos were difficult enough and unique as compared with any other problem we face, situation has become further involved by the actions of the NLHX abetted by communist neighbors in events of this summer and fall which brought whole matter to attention of UN. These added difficulties in Department's opinion do not mean that all we have planned and set in motion for the eventual stabilization of the situation in Laos had been ill conceived or worthy of abandonment merely because it has not met our full expectations. Criticism of entire military and economic aid program by Tobler to which you gave your support in reftel is in our view sweeping, imprecisely stated and therefore extremely difficult to assess. If Department were to accept this wholesale indictment our entire effort to date, great embarrassment

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–359. Top Secret; Limit Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Chapman and Steeves; cleared with Anderson, Usher, Saccio, Bell, and Dillon; and approved by Parsons.

[2] See footnote 2, Document 288.

[3] Not found.

[4] Document 298.

would face us in moving forward on many aspects current programs inaugurated result careful and laborious effort agreed to by many Departments USG.

For various reasons but particularly because of international consequences I cannot accept thesis that we should prepare the ground for informing American people of failure of our mission in Laos. Our stance must be quite the contrary, soliciting domestic support, cooperation and understanding of unique and difficult problems which can not possibly be solved quickly but require instead tenacious and unremitting effort view importance area to US interests.

PEO Training Program. We are just now approving, belatedly, augmentation of PEO personnel from 66 to 106. This has required coordination and interaction, stemming from your recommendations, staff work at CINCPAC, Defense and State. In addition to inter-Departmental USG action general agreement on the concept of the training program was reached in our discussions with French in Paris. Progress reports to date while not glowing had at least been encouraging. To revise totally this program or produce substitute would in our opinion be practical impossibility. Remedial efforts and improvements certainly are required but we cannot accept characterization as "built on quicksand" and "programming for failure" as justifiable estimate.

We are currently involved especially this time of year in devising plans and techniques for the improvement and support of economic aid to Laos. Lack of progress is of course chargeable to Lao lack of experience, non-existence proper institutions, internal insecurity, which have required "crash" approaches. Monetary reform was carefully considered step. Other expert opinion would not label it as failure. If we are to do anything constructive in bringing gradual order out of chaos we cannot write off efforts thus far as worthless and impossible. While Laos program has suffered ill effects of considerable criticism and admitted known deficiencies, it has kept Laos within orbit of free world. This has been accomplished despite the many handicaps including activities ICC, weakness of former neutralist government and venality of certain leaders. Recent crisis, resulting in added public and UN attention, may assist us in accomplishing objectives seemingly impossible in quieter days.

If there has been seeming dichotomy of US policy vis-à-vis Laos, Department of course shares your concern and believes you and your staff should make maximum effort eliminate this impression. To do so believe as stated Deptel 1051[5] you should act as spokesman for US policy to all factions: King, Phoui, LHL, CDNI and Army. You should confine [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] operational rela-

[5] Document 292.

tionships with CDNI to appropriate operational measures fully coordinated by you, providing whatever active encouragement they give them within framework of policy.

We have viewed emergence CDNI as political pressure group with favor and welcome inclusion its members in cabinet. We believe CDNI has played highly useful role to date despite fact we would have preferred its taking more measured view on number of issues. We consider emergence CDNI to its present position as indicative political evolution now in progress in Laos. Believe younger CDNI with apparent support of crown is in ascendancy and that while Phoui and older politicians play most important and indispensable part at present CDNI represents vital future asset. To eliminate our support this organization now would result in serious loss of confidence in US among Lao. Although difficulties of handling CDNI fully appreciated believe such difficulties inherent in manipulating any power group.

At same time we also hold that Phoui only Lao political figure at present able to unite all factions under his leadership. While we must recognize he probably not dynamic leader but astute politician we nevertheless believe he could make greater effort speak directly with CDNI to make his views clear before issue is joined on a particular question. For instance we wonder how much confrontation of opinions there has been between him and other members cabinet both LHL and CDNI on constitutional revisions. Yet indications are that subject will be considered very soon in connection with extension of Assembly's mandate and timing of elections and may be new source of friction. In meantime we get impression he seeking manipulate all elements favorable to him and may even view you in this context.

Friction between younger and older groups appears inevitable. Seems inherent in situation that as younger elements gain greater power such gains will be at expense older men. Therefore US must seek continually reduce this friction to minimum by encouraging all patriotic elements discuss their problems among themselves and work together in greater interest of country. Finally Laos dependent in unique degree on what happens outside Laos, i.e., US support, reactions Geneva powers, UN and bloc activities and every internal act has its external consequence fateful for Laos. This is fact which should be starting point calculations all who wield power in Laos if they are true patriots.

Herter

296. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, November 25, 1959.

SUBJECT

Commentary on New York's 477[2] (attached)

1. In FE's opinion the Secretary General's report on Laos[3] should be read with two factors in mind:

a) The Lao have immeasurable confidence in the UN and in its Secretary General whom they regard with awe. A gentle and polite people, they would be apt to speak along lines they thought would be pleasing to their guest.

b) The Secretary General approaches the situation in Laos with certain definite views, notably that the only long-term solution requires mediation between Vientiane and Hanoi; that the events of last summer were in part provoked by the strong anti-Communist stand of the RLG, as well as by too strenuous activities by the U.S.; and that there exists considerable tension within Laos itself.

Thus his statement that the tension in Laos is predominantly domestic in nature (paragraph 1) and his report of the King's statement that "although it was 'useful' to have claimed mountain people were being subverted by Communists, real story is that two peoples (Lao and ethnic minorities) have fought for hundreds of years." In fact, we consider that the basic situation in Laos, a country made up of isolated

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[1] Source: Department of State, SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 312 UN Presence, 1959. Secret. Drafted by Chapman and cleared with Usher, Anderson, and Steeves. Herter initialed the source text.

[2] In telegram 477, November 24, Lodge reported the results of a briefing of French, British, Canadian, and U.S. Representatives at the United Nations by Hammarskjöld on his visit to Laos, his analysis of the situation there, and his plans for the future. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 315/11–2559; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] The account of Hammarskjöld's mission to Laos and his impressions of the situation there became the source of a disagreement between the IO and FE bureaus which is reported in notes of the Secretary's Staff Meeting, November 25, which read as follows:

"Mr. Wilcox stressed the importance of the talk between Lodge and the SYG on Laos and said he was reasonably reassured regarding the latter's intentions. Mr. Parsons differed with this view and said that the SYG's analysis was totally different from all other analyses in that it ignored to an extraordinary degree the Communist factors and exploitation. Mr. Reinhardt indicated his agreement. Mr. Parsons suggested later that there was a real need to communicate directly with the SYG, preferably through the Secretary, to give him the full flavor of our interpretation of Communist efforts in Laos. Mr. Berding noted the SYG's suspicion of our own activities."

This disagreement carried over to the next Staff Meeting, November 27, as follows:

"There was continuing argument between FE and IO on the SYG's attitude regarding Laos and the necessity for further discussions with him on the actual situation there. Mr. Wilcox emphasized the importance of timing of any moves we make in Laos, such as augmentation of our military training personnel." (Notes of the Secretary of State's Staff Meetings by John A. Calhoun; Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

self-sustaining villages, is essentially stable. While it is true that there is little sympathy between the mountain people and the plain-dwelling Lao, and that occasional fighting has occurred, the tension between the various ethnic groups has been grossly exaggerated. The Secretary General, in his report, noticeably makes no mention of North Vietnamese participation or of the historic link between the Pathet Lao and North Viet-Nam. Yet the fighting and agitation that have taken place since July and spread throughout the country cannot be interpreted simply in terms of internal tensions. Even the UN Subcommittee found that the rebels "receive support from the territory of the DRVN." (Paragraph 97 of its Report.)[4]

2. The King's revelation that he had been in communication with Ho Chi Minh has not been known to the Department or to CIA. However, it may be questioned whether these communications went beyond formal exchanges of greetings and whether they might be considered "as a favorable development which argues against freezing the situation which is fluid and thereby disrupting this link."[5] King Savang has in the past been emotionally anti-Pathet Lao and anti-Viet Minh and it would seem passing strange if he had maintained personal communications with Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the country whose divisions came within 30 miles of the royal capital in 1953.

3. The Secretary General's statement that the RLG would "welcome" the return of the ICC (Paragraph 6) should be read in the light of the two factors cited in paragraph 1 above. The Secretary General has maintained that the Geneva Agreement was still applicable to Laos and the Lao may perhaps have deferred politely to his strong opinion. We doubt, however, that the RLG has altered its firm opposition to the reactivation of the ICC.

Regarding the Secretary General's argument that the function of border observation belonged properly with the ICC,[6] L/FE submits "that observation of the Lao borders is a proper function of the ICC if carried out for the purpose of regulating the introduction of military personnel and war materials (Article 27(c)) into Laos. Further, it is believed a persuasive argument can be made that such observation is a proper function in the exercise of the ICC's power to supervise the execution of *any* of the provisions of the cease-fire agreement (Article 27(a)). It might be added that having once allowed the ICC to reconvene in Laos for the purpose of carrying out border inspections it

[4] U.N. doc. S/4236, November 5.

[5] (paragraph 5) [of telegram 477 from USUN, November 24. Footnote in the source text.]

[6] Paragraph 4. [Footnote in the source text.]

might be difficult, from a legal point of view, to limit its activities only to these border inspections."[7]

4. Despite the above reservations regarding the Secretary General's report, we consider his proposal to undertake a substantial UN effort to assist in the economic development of Laos as sound. The problem, which Kuznetsov himself raised, may be to find funds. However, if this UN effort is limited to bringing in technical assistance, the magnitude of funds required may be manageable. Furthermore, limiting the UN to technical assistance would have the further advantage that it would bring numerous technicians and experts to Laos. The arrival of other foreigners would seem to be in line with our interest in trying to reduce the size of the American presence in Laos, or at least to make it less apparent by blending it in a larger international community.

[7] Quoted from a memorandum from Katherine Lincoln to Chapman, November 25. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2559; included in the microfiche supplement)

297. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 30, 1959—11 a.m.

1491. Reference: Deptel 1095,[2] Embtels 1456, 1485, 1476.[3] Although I share, as Phoui, your view that it is essential for young to acquire experience in government and national leadership while older men still on scene, and while Prime Minister also fully appreciates merits of principles on which CDNI founded, he considers and I agree that CDNI has contributed little or nothing that could not have been

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–3059. Top Secret; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

[2] Document 295.

[3] In telegram 1456, November 25, Smith reported a conversation with Phoui in which the Prime Minister summarized a Lao Cabinet meeting of November 23. Phoui described the meeting as "stormy and rough" and the King's reaction on all issues as "violent," but noted none of the major issues facing Laos was resolved. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2559) Telegram 1485 has not been found in Department of State files. In telegram 1476, November 27, Smith reported on a private luncheon conversation with Prince Souvanna Phouma on November 24, in which the Prince expressed the view that he had not approved formation of the CDNI as a political party and he now favored abolishing it. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/11–2759) Telegram 1456 is included in the microfiche supplement.

obtained from Tiao Leuam or Keo Viprakone or Colonel Phoumi or General Ouane without CDNI label and that Khamphan, Sisouk and Inpeng, who seem chief troublemakers have not demonstrated the character, ability, force or patriotic spirit that would have at least partially justified their demand for key roles in the government. They are in addition willfully oblivious of fact "every internal act has external consequences fateful to Laos". In the interests of the US and SEA, as well as of Laos, I cannot see how the CDNI can be allowed to continue its wrecking policy. Contrary to CDNI accusations, I believe Phoui has by and large endeavored discuss issues, including that of constitutional revision, and speak frankly with young colleagues far beyond traditional Lao limits in such relationships and even went so far as allow Khamphan accompany him to US in October, yet more often than not Prime Minister has come up against stone wall with young especially Khamphan who notoriously sulky, obstinate and uncooperative unless his particular and frequently ill-considered views immediately accepted.

It had been my understanding that US policy was to support the three conservative groups equally on basis full joint efforts being absolutely required to attain desired goals. However, as far as I am aware assistance we have accorded CDNI [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] far surpasses that given LHL so it scarcely surprising CDNI has impression it outweighs LHL in our estimation and Phoui might well question our sincerity in repeatedly stating our confidence in him while at same time bulk our material backing goes to those who undermine his government with obvious exception of few such as Tiao Leuam.

In point of fact problem of CDNI raised its ugly head again at my meeting with Phoui November 27 when he asked me how it would be best resolve it once mandate extended and Cabinet strengthened (Embtel 1485).

1. Phoui feels, and I concur, that dominant CDNI young see no lasting need cooperate with him and other older wiser LHL as long as they think they can rely on Army support. Since difficult session with King November 23 for example, ring leader Khamphan Panya has been "extremely active in seeking out military" presumably in effort defeat Prime Minister's plan for prolongation present legislature. While Phoui does not fear Khamphan can win out unless by coup d'etat which highly unlikely, he does think time has come to remove military from political arena thereby depriving CDNI of its major anti-constitutional prop.

2. Phoui correctly pointed out that CDNI was created as "lay association" to support and not to negate RLG's reform actions and anti-Communist policies. Now it had clearly though covertly or indirectly become nothing less than an opposition political party and thus

operating illegally and irregularly inasmuch as its statutes specifically provide it was not to be a party. Furthermore military are in theory forbidden from engaging in political activities. If all members of CDNI persist in adhering to it, LHL should also be allowed recruit members from Army. Up to now this never attempted though LHL leaders have frequently questioned Phoui on this manifest injustice and Phoui's reply to date has been that his party cannot properly invite military to join. Nevertheless if CDNI does not reorganize, Prime Minister may have to suppress it as illegal or yield to LHL desires. (Souvanna Phouma indicated to me he had advised Prime Minister thus to suppress CDNI if it did not return to its original character which Souvanna had approved as Premier with distinct understanding it would never become political party (Embtel 1476).) I am puzzled as to what actual unique or unselfish contributions are believed by Department to have been made by CDNI.

3. One of CDNI's tactics to win grass roots following has been with FAL's assistance to distribute tin roofing, building materials and tools with CDNI claiming credit in direct competition with RLG's rural aid program. When I queried Phoui as to source CDNI's funds for this purpose he stated they came from "US special services" allotted directly to FAL which also sometimes helped with special air transport. Much the same true of government sponsored "youth rallies" according Phoui. I told him that this could not be true. He asked me to double check as he was certain that it had been true even if it now halted temporarily. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]

4. Phoui also asserted that many Lao and some diplomatic missions here distrust the "revolutionary CDNI" which so closely affiliated with armed forces fearing lest power will eventually be taken by them in order suppress democratic regime along lines Thailand, Burma, Pakistan. No one dared protest openly however, as CDNI still generally understood to be officially supported by USG. King himself deluded into believing that CDNI once in power will restore absolute monarchy and this why he has risen to bait of possible coup d'etat. Phoui's opinion that King playing with fire and that, should CDNI–FAL take over, present Lao-US policies would immediately be scuttled.

5. In view above Phoui envisages two alternative solutions: Either (A) CDNI abandons de facto status of political party and reverts to original purpose its founding, thereby enabling military to continue membership or (B) CDNI openly emerges as regular legal party and excludes military entirely. Latter would then set up their own "benevolent" organization for their "good works program". What he would most like would be full and fair merger CDNI with LHL.

I have been fully aware of fact that Phoui will hesitate to use me as an "element favorable to him" only insofar as he fears I might find out and contradict. This I have done already on three occasions. However, as you know, I have had to give appearance, at least within US circles of some partisanship toward Phoui in order to counterbalance clear appearance of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] partisanship for CDNI which only relatively recently brought under control.

Comment: Friction between young and old would be much easier to neutralize if [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] activities here were confined to "appropriate operational measures fully coordinated" by me. This, for reasons of which you are already aware, has [not?] been easy to accomplish. I believe however that it may be possible to do so [*3½ lines of source text not declassified*]. I expect to comment further [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on alleged CDNI ascendancy in near future as I feel Department possibly misled in this connection. I also will wish to comment on possible shifts in status of our overall approach here which may call for some special foresight and support for [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] activities in months to come in other fields that are not now necessary.

Am commenting separately economic aspects reference telegram.[6]

Smith

[6] See Document 299.

298. Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Ambassador in Laos (Smith)[1]

Washington, December 1, 1959.

DEAR HORACE: My reply to your telegram No. 1300 of November 8[2] included mention of a personal letter to follow. This is that letter and I think you will understand why we have chosen a private means of communication for your eyes alone.

[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 61 D 6, Smith. Secret; Official–Informal. Cleared in draft by Henderson.

[2] Regarding telegram 1300, see footnote 2, Document 288. Parsons' reply is telegram 1095, Document 295.

Without going into detail, the impression created by your telegram on readers here is that there has been a lack of coordination within the country team. This stems in part from your references to "dichotomy" here and in Embtel 1307.[3] As Ambassador you, of course, are the coordinator of the country team. Executive Orders 10,575 and 16,580 and Department of State Circulars 58, July 24, 1956 and CG–264[4] cloak the Chief of Mission with clear authority to assure effective coordination. If there are disputes which can not be resolved, there are procedures for referral to Washington. I do not think that we had previously been made aware that the situation was so serious [*4½ line of source text not declassified*]. The authority you have as Ambassador should be sufficient for coordination but if it is not, please inform us what authority or direction you feel is required.

The second point I wish to make involves the propriety of the Ambassador, as coordinator of the country team effort, joining in the criticism voiced by one member of the country team. To join, in confidence, with one member in criticism of much of what other members are doing under your guidance as Ambassador, is likely to be damaging to your position with those other members. Actually, it appears to us that Tobler was also criticizing you and all your predecessors who have had the responsibility for our affairs in Laos.[5] Your joining with a country team member also creates problems here for us, given the broad scope of the telegram and your concurrence in the position taken by the representative of one Washington agency. It is our view that the Ambassador must maintain his prestige and position as the President's representative and must in no way imply that he himself is merely a member—not the leader—of the country team.

I have discussed this matter with Loy Henderson and have reviewed also your telegram No. 1307 and Deptel 1095. In view of the latter telegram which was cleared with Messrs. Dillon and Saccio prior to dispatch, I am not commenting further on your message No. 1300 except from the administrative viewpoint to urge that you enjoin upon drafting officers the importance of brevity and clarity as well as careful organization of content. Excessively long telegrams place an inordinate strain on our resources and it is essential that you review draft messages carefully from the standpoint of economy of language.

Sincerely yours,

J. Graham Parsons[6]

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[3] See footnote 3, Document 289.

[4] Executive Order 10575, November 6, 1954, is entitled "Foreign Aid Function, Administration of." (19 *Fed. Reg.* 7249) The reference to Executive Order 16580 is apparently in error. Circular 58 and CG–264 have not been identified.

[5] Parsons was Ambassador to Laos May 1956–February 1958.

[6] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

299. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 1, 1959—1 p.m.

1509. For Parsons from Smith. ReDeptel 1095.[2] Following are my comments on economic portions of reference telegram. Fully appreciate that comprehensive character Embtel 1300 makes rapid analysis and response quite impossible. Whole point was to raise for consideration by top level US agencies concerned the far reaching implications of this message. Even pending receipt additional telegram treating specific economic and aid questions, I feel it necessary correct certain misapprehensions that appear to have been created by reference telegram. It was not my intention nor indeed Tobler's to level "wholesale indictment on our entire effort to date," nor to imply that "all of what we planned and set in motion for eventual stabilization of situation in Laos has been ill-conceived or worthy of abandonment merely because it has not met our full expectations." Fact of matter is that if number of our efforts had not been successful this country would undoubtedly already be down drain. What we did say and what I wish reiterate today is that effort taken as whole has not been nearly successful enough and that Tobler and I consider our programs in Laos likely prove "too little and too late" unless major changes in magnitude and significant changes in method and administration are undertaken soonest.

I agree that message may have been somewhat imprecise and sweeping but I concurred in it because I felt that Tobler on basis of intensive briefings and keen observation had succeeded in wrapping up in one short piece a piercing assessment of basic problems that beset our effort. This approach synthesized our soul-searching talks over past six weeks and placed in current focus the basic problem, elements of which have been reported by me over past many months. We agreed that this assessment should be forwarded to Department and ICA as boldly and as frankly as possible. Had this presentation been duly caveated with credit for past efforts and attempt made to balance out good with bad, central thrust of what Tobler had to say would have been lost.

I should also like emphasize that Tobler was sent out here with specific mandate from Riddleberger to take an over-all look at our posture and to report to him directly on what he found. Further he has

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–159. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department.

[2] Document 295.

specific instructions from Riddleberger "to make Laos a clean show." Thus bold thinking of this sort would appear to me to be basic ingredient for accomplishing his mission.

This is not evidence of frustration which develops from our inability to produce desired results. It is much more fundamental than this and when Tobler speaks of programming for failure, he means merely that desired results will simply not be achieved with tools he has at his disposal under current programming. When he said that the program was built on quicksand, he meant that effort taken as whole was simply not designed to buy us success and that instead we were spending highly disproportionate amount of our time simply bolstering foundations under multiplicity of our approaches. In this I also concur.

This reference was not directed at PEO training program which Tobler feels has been considerably more successful generally speaking than training programs undertaken on civilian side. Nor indeed was Tobler directing his criticism at monetary reform. While he still has misgivings on some of indirect consequences of monetary reform, he would be among first to say that the reform in itself was necessary first step. Having seen something of pre-reform period and played part I did in finally bringing monetary reform into being I feel even more certain than Tobler of its high value and its success.

Finally, I have found Tobler alert in grasping political significance of the many things we do and when he addresses himself to the military side of our program, he is viewing it not as military expert for which he is not qualified but rather from viewpoint his own efforts and political consequences of our efforts [*1 line of source text not declassified*].

Finally, we do not agree that "our lack of progress is 'solely' chargeable to Lao lack of experience, non-existence of proper institutions and internal insecurity." While it is true that Lao carry lion's share of responsibility for lack of progress made, we too have been lax in providing soon enough the kinds of trained highly-skilled and French-speaking personnel that were absolutely essential in early days of our program. While progress has been made in this direction, it is still not enough and USOM will simply not succeed in its task unless this hurdle can be overcome.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that whole purpose of this message was to try to give you and Riddleberger insight into our deepest thoughts, no matter how unpalatable they may be because we feel so strongly that course we are following is not going to succeed. We were thinking only of the present and the future about which we can all do something and not much concerned about past judgments which must have seemed justified at the time. It seemed to us quite clear that unless action were taken immediately under recommenda-

tions we jointly formulated, if indeed it is not already too late, we should look to a UN solution for problem of Laos. As you know since sending this message, we have further pursued this approach in our country team message[3] and are even more convinced now than we were then that this would have substantial advantages to US. We fully recognize that the advantages must be weighed with obvious disadvantages inherent in this solution but they in turn must be weighed with the ability, indeed the desirability, of US continuing to carry this free world burden alone. Separate message on this subject will have reached you prior receipt this message.

There is one further thought I should like to add. We were shown earlier this fall how very easy it was for the opposition to undermine our whole posture in this country. With all due respect to efforts we and Lao have made, it was not those efforts but rather the rumblings in SEATO, appropriate speeches made, and lightning action of UN which pulled us out of hole. Disturbances of this sort could reoccur at any moment and in fact are occurring now albeit on smaller scale throughout Laos. We were not prepared then nor are we now to cope internally with a repeat performance and I am not clear why you feel that the "embarrassment which would face us in moving forward on many aspects of current programs inaugurated as result careful and laborious effort agreed to by many departments of USG," would be greater than the embarrassments that would result from failure to face squarely facts now at hand.

I am sure you will understand that our Embtel was not meant to criticize or belittle in any manner the tremendous and vital efforts made by you and others in Washington which have kept Laos afloat to date.

Smith

[3] Telegram 1500, November 30; see footnote 2, *infra*.

300. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, December 2, 1959.

SUBJECT

Vientiane's 1500, November 30, Laos Aid Program[2]

Introduction

This message was intended by the Country Team as a preliminary reaction to the move now being made by the UN Secretary General and others to try to bring Laos under an effective UN umbrella in economic as well as in international political and/or military intervention fields.

Summary

The Country Team in Laos has concluded that it would be wise to promote the development of a new pattern of aid to Laos in which a UN organization through a truly neutral delegation would play the leading role as "coordinator" of existing aid programs and as "manager" of new ones and those transferred fully into UN hands.

Background

This conclusion is based on the belief that the aid programs as presently conceived, with the US providing the lion's share and maintaining strict controls, have not been adequate to both counter Communist pressures and meet the needs of the Lao. Despite the progress which had been made, it became clear to the Country Team that after the events of July 17 the US programs and those of other friendly

[1] Source: Department of State, SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 300 General US Attitudes and Actions. Secret. Drafted by Erickson and concurred in by Anderson, Usher, and Chapman.

[2] Telegram 1500 is included in the microfiche supplement. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–3059) The telegram was discussed at the Secretary's Staff Meeting on December 2:

"Mr. Parsons summarized a telegram from our Ambassador in Vientiane containing totally new views regarding a UN coordinated and administered aid program for Laos. He felt this would have serious implications for the entire area and would prejudice our obtaining appropriations for our programs. He thought our recent telegram to New York on this problem was the approach we should adhere to. The Secretary agreed generally but cautioned that we not be antagonistic to a UN presence. He added that it would be helpful if we could get UN endorsement for what we do there." (*Ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

The telegram to New York is telegram 525 to USUN, sent to Vientiane as 1141, November 30, in which the Department of State provided a summary of its views on expansion of U.N. assistance to Laos. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/11–3059; included in the microfiche supplement)

nations were going to have to be sharply stepped up in both time and magnitude if Laos were to be strengthened sufficiently to continue to retain its independence from Communist domination even with international moral support.

Preponderance of US Aid, Notably Military Aid

It also became apparent that the heavy preponderance of US aid, with the accent on military aid, had undesirable effects: it strengthened the Communist propaganda position, providing a pretext for intervention; it weakened the interest of other potential contributors to keeping Laos afloat; it leads Laos to believe we consider Laos of such strategic importance that they can safely make unlimited demands on US resources; and US controls inevitably build up serious resentment.

Advantages of UN Umbrella for Economic Aid

The Country Team sees the following advantages in putting economic aid under the UN umbrella:[3] an active role of the UN in economic aid would supply an excellent basis for a UN political "presence" in Laos and reduce the long-range burden on the US; it would be proof of the peaceful objectives of the US in Laos; pacification resulting from UN Mission activities would reduce the size and role of the Army and more aid could be directed toward economic objectives; UN officials could work more effectively than US officials toward the improvement of the Lao administration.

Organizational Pattern of Aid

The Country Team sees as the major task that of developing a pattern that would satisfy the US Government that the objectives of its aid to Laos are being effectively attained by a UN organization. It proposes that in the beginning only certain segments of the aid program be transferred to the UN and others gradually transferred as the UN Mission becomes increasingly effective. The phasing of these transfers is discussed in some detail as to timing and results.

[3] In circular telegram 797, December 4, sent to Vientiane for action and to 16 other posts for information, the Department of State responded that the United States should cooperate fully with the United Nations in the economic area, but did not believe it was desirable or feasible to turn over all U.S. economic aid programs in Laos to U.N. control. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/12–459; included in the microfiche supplement)

301. Editorial Note

On December 2, Ambassador Smith and Admiral Riley called on King Savang Vatthana for a 2-hour discussion which ranged over a variety of topics. In telegram 1578 from Vientiane, December 8, Smith summarized the discussion at length and then chararacterized it as follows:

"To me this interview indicated that Sri Savang Vatthana, now that he is King, is determined to brook no interference or advice from anyone in ruling Laos autocratically.

"He made it clear to me as Crown Prince that he would get rid of present Assembly at first opportunity. He also made it clear to me as Regent that he would get rid of French as soon as possible. It now appears that as King, he is at least serving first notice that he may attempt push us out also if we did not tailor our aid and temper our advice to his liking.

"I do not believe that he will be able to accomplish his aim if Phoumi and the many other democratically-minded elements in LHL, CDNI and Army are given encouragement and support they must have to save Laos and still keep it within its constitutional framework. However, if we continue permit Khamphan Panya and other elements devoted to establishment 'autocratic rule by Royal decree as Army might in Laos', to block efforts some democratic elements to coalesce in active program save country constitutionally only alternative to Communist domination may soon become rule by Royal decree." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–859; also included in the microfiche supplement)

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302. Letter From the Ambassador in Laos (Smith) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Vientiane, December 15, 1959.

DEAR JEFF: I am greatly relieved to know that the Department [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] deeply disturbed by the continuing evidence of a CDNI–Phoui split and recognize that the CDNI is actively competing for political power and is assuming the role of an opposition party. The fact that the CDNI was in large measure assuming the role of an opposition party to the U.S.-encouraged "solid conservative front party," LHL, was recognized and reported by me

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1559. Top Secret; Eyes Only; Official–Informal. [*1 page of text not declassified*]

during the course of its original negotiations with Prince Souvanna Phouma when he tried to bring five members of the CDNI into his cabinet at my request, and later during negotiations with Phoui for the original organization of the present government in August last year and again in its maneuvering during the December–January reshuffle and Phoui's battle for full powers instead of a coup. It then pretended, as it still does, to be a "non-partisan patriotic organization" rather than a political party seeking power for itself or for front men it controls. While I feel sure that several of its controlling members are sincerely devoted to strengthening anti-communist elements for the preservation of Laos' independence, there are very few of them who in practice have been willing to place this general objective above the advancement of individual or partisan interests. Largely by grace of American help and advice, this organization has built up a rival conservative political organization in the provinces and has seemed to me to seize alertly on every possibility either by action on its own or by dragging of feet in the cabinet designed to prevent insofar as possible the LHL from strengthening or building up its organizations in the provinces.

In the face of this more and more obvious partisan rather than patriotic motivation of actions on the part of the CDNI, it has been surprising to me that Phoui has so seldom descended to partisan acts and has had such tolerant patience in his persistent efforts to persuade the LHL–CDNI–Army cabinet to work effectively together in the national interest. In this, he has been rewarded by the strong contributions made by Thao Leuam under Eisenberg's guidance in assisting him toward fiscal reform and by Colonel Phoumi in Army reorganization and training. As the man who gave Khamphan his original start in Foreign Affairs by taking Khamphan with him to the Geneva Conference, it is not to me surprising that Phoui has found it difficult to go to Khamphan on his own initiative to explain matters when Khamphan has with such studied arrogance refrained from consulting Phoui or informing him on subjects and decisions of great import to Laos in the foreign relations field. Phoui considered that Khamphan's action in encouraging the King, against Phoui's strenuous protest in cabinet meetings presided over by the King, to order that the RLG request to the UN for military assistance be sent without any consultation with friendly powers, prevented the request from being reshaped into one which could have been fully and positively supported by the findings of the UN Security Council Subcommittee instead of one which may make any future Lao requests for aid somewhat suspect in international circles. Phoui also considered that Khamphan made a serious error in uncoordinated and unauthorized action instructing the Lao UN delegation to abstain on the Algerian vote, a serious and unjustifiable blow to France whose full support is needed in both UN and military and economic assistance areas. He considered that if Sisouk

had stopped to think or consult the cabinet or the Prime Minister before issuing some of his contradictory press releases, the international posture of Laos would have been much stronger in world opinion.

It has been in attempting to act as a national leader instead of an LHL partisan that Phoui has risked more and more of his basic political support with the LHL, which he persuaded to grant monetary reform, to approve inclusion of the CDNI in his cabinet and to support his reform program with a grant of full powers and permission to use deputies in civil service positions to help strengthen administrative efforts of the government to win the loyalty of the people. The LHL supported him reluctantly on the inclusion of the CDNI in the cabinet and later of Army representation in the cabinet on the basis of our assurances that although they had had no experience they would serve in the government unselfishly and cooperate honestly and frankly on a completely non-partisan basis with the Prime Minister in implementing energetically the plans already broadly outlined by and with the Prime Minister. It quickly became apparent to the more discerning members of the LHL that the CDNI was fanatically devoted to the promotion of the partisan interests of the CDNI rather than in forwarding programs of the reform government they had been permitted to join. It became more clear each day that their principal objective was to replace most if not all of the LHL with candidates of their own choosing. Yet Phoui continued to accept our assurances that "this could not be true" because it was not our policy to support the CDNI against the LHL but only as a part of a joint LHL–CDNI–Army conservative front under Phoui's leadership. Being convinced that our assistance and guidance was the lifeline of the CDNI, Phoui accepted our assurances and continued patiently though not brilliantly, to try to act as a national rather than a partisan leader. I pointed up the apparent dichotomy in American policy here [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and in Washington, with the help of State Department representatives, obtained corrections in the final draft of a policy paper on Laos, which should have eliminated, through our influence on the CDNI, any continuation of partisan CDNI rather than of joint national government support. Despite highest level assurances in Washington [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the dichotomy of approach did continue here with what promised to be disastrous consequences until December 11. [*9 lines of source text not declassified*]

So our assistance has continued "to be used in such a way as to intensify domestic political rivalries." Unless there is a change in the way this support is used, there is no question but that "the perpetuation of these rivalries will obviously so involve the RLG in internal squabbling as to impede any progress this dry season." There is also now no question that "the dichotomy of U.S. policy," which I have

reported for so many months past, "is a reflection of the above problem." In our separate support of Phoui and of the CDNI and of certain LHL members, it is only to Phoui that it has been adequately made clear that the purpose of our assistance is to insure adequate support of our basic policy of strengthening the total effectiveness of all anti-communist elements for the preservation of Laos' independence and *not* for the advancement of individual or partisan interests. I have long and painfully maintained [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] it seemed apparent that the manner in which we were supporting the CDNI and encouraging it to stand as a unit against all other conservative groups was "tending to deepen the split rather than effect the unity of anti-communist elements, which is the basic U.S. objective." [*12½ lines of source text not declassified*] Again on this occasion the word of an Ambassador quoting explicit directives from Washington did not prevail against the contrary advice of the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] self-appointed strategist to the CDNI. This action was in the face of clear-cut instructions from Washington [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that I was to be the sole voice of the U.S. in this matter and in the face of my own specific directive that every effort be made to encourage the CDNI and the Army to cooperate with Phoui in his plans to comply with official U.S. policy suggestions in the matter.

I had long been strongly urging [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] with leading members of the CDNI and LHL the concept that the CDNI could only avoid seriously splitting the conservative front by working as a part of the Rally of the Lao People. It had always been denied [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that the CDNI had any intention of becoming a separate political party, at least in the foreseeable future, and it had been repeatedly and indignantly promised [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that every effort was already being made to bring about closer CDNI cooperation with the LHL, with the idea that individual members of the CDNI could merge with the LHL and encourage honest and effective policies from within by example and pretext rather than set themselves up as a rival political party or group. Nevertheless, as is finally unquestionably apparent this last is just what they have done [*5½ lines of source text not declassified*].

At the present CDNI-promoted impasse, it has at last become unmistakably apparent to all, what has long been apparent to Phoui and to me, that the best solution would be an honest merger of CDNI into LHL. In fact the situation requires it if the NLHX is not again to win most of the seats in an election.

However, it will not be a simple matter, even if the CDNI drops openly its "holier than thou" attitude as it has done privately in its recent cooperation with individuals tainted with corruption and as it

might better do in view of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the known corruption of some of its own members and accepted advisers.

If CDNI takes the "healthy" move of admitting that it has openly assumed role of a political party, there would seem to be no reason why a committee consisting of an equal number of members from each side under Phoui's chairmanship could not discuss methods of merging that would be fair and satisfactory to each side. I believe that the LHL would justifiably insist that if Army leaders wish to continue in politics and hold electoral office, they resign their Army positions as required by the electoral law and take their chances with other civilian candidates. I believe there would also have to be some arrangement for determining the conservative front candidates most suitable for the single lists, as, for instance, by a party primary, if there is to be real cooperation, for under past separatist policies the CDNI has been promoting the idea that no more than 10 to 15 LHL can hope to win in the next election and LHL holds the belief that very few of the CDNI have a chance. Thus unless there is a primary or a two-stage election, there appears to be little chance that an arrangement for a single list can be reached without splintering the solid conservative front and having at least as many "rump candidates" running as official ones. This plethora of candidates would of course be a great advantage to the Communists as it was in the May 4 election. It has been for the specific purpose of meeting this problem and of permitting a merger in good faith of the CDNI with the LHL, that I have been urging the importance of including in the new electoral law two-stage elections ever since last May 4. With this proviso, I agree wholeheartedly with your suggested steps 4A and B. However, I do not believe we can hope for too much from the King in this connection. For him to even appear sympathetic after the partisan role he has been almost openly playing might be very difficult for him. I suggest therefore that we reverse the timing in the matter and go first strongly to Phoui, the principal members of the CDNI and responsible LHL members and then promptly appeal to the King for his support through my presenting a letter from the Secretary. Thus, he would only have to accept and quietly encourage and not too openly or actively support something which would in effect be a reversal of his almost universally known present position.

The staff of the Embassy Political Section [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] are working on some suggestions as to methods of merging the CDNI and the LHL into a single group with no undue hardship on either side. They will suggest both strategy and timing and I will send their thinking to you under cover of a letter of comment from me.

Now that we have eliminated the local dichotomy of U.S. approach, if Saccio is able to deliver on his promises to make USOM aid here more apparent quickly, particularly in vital road construction, and if we can continue to have the benefit of solid British and French support, I still believe we can persuade the Lao to take the actions they need to take politically, financially, socially, administratively and militarily to save themselves from a "peaceful" communist takeover. With these provisos, I think we still have better than a fifty-fifty chance; without them, we may soon see ourselves maneuvered into a position where our present collective defense arrangements through SEATO will not be enough to keep Laos from sliding behind the curtain.

I am sorry to have felt required to send so many long and complicated reports by telegram but we have been on the brink of disaster here for many months and I have had increasingly the feeling that Washington had somehow failed to recognize this fact fully enough to react strongly and quickly enough to save situation. It is a relief that dangerous CDNI partisanship has at last been brought out into the open so that there can no longer be any doubt that the relatively nebulous evidence thereof which so disturbed me did indeed warrant urgent top level U.S. consideration. Having lapsed under pressure of limitations of time and staff and my concern over the urgency of the subject matter, from the brevity so desirable in telegraphic communications in the Foreign Service, I intend to try earnestly to retrieve my reputation in this respect. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*]

With thanks for your continuing patience and the hope that, now that the dichotomy that I have reported and that all had previously doubted has at last become clearly evident, you may feel that I have been justified at being so disturbed.

Most sincerely,

Horace H. Smith[2]

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

303. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 16, 1959—7 p.m.

1648. CINCPAC for POLAD. Reference Department telegrams 991 and 1051.[2] Department telegrams 991 and 1051 outlined in some detail Department's presentation US objectives in Laos. This telegram analyzes present situation against background these objectives.

External (numbered paragraphs correspond Department telegram 991)

1. RLG by response to SYG's personal intitiative, its official statements and general reception treatment accorded UN representatives and staff recently sent here has shown most friendly sympathetic disposition towards UN and its programs. (G–73)[3]

2. Firm assurances been given by Foreign Minister Khamphan Panya that Laos will consult and coordinate in advance, especially with US any contemplated resort to SEATO. (Embassy telegram 1221)[4] King also indicates slightly greater receptivity this need for advance consultation during meeting with Admiral Riley (Embassy telegram 1578).[5]

3. In addition Phoui's statement Paris, he took advantage official dinner for SYG November 13 (Embassy telegram 1364)[6] to reaffirm RLG neutrality stance. Lead article official *Daily News Bulletin* Lao press December 3 (Embassy despatch 204)[7] further elaborated this theme.

4. RLG continues seek all sorts foreign aid from friendly powers, and has indicated full willingness readiness accept UN economic, technical assistance as long Communist powers not directly involved. With eye US Congressional, popular attitude towards aid, Phoui has sought continue firm democratic facade, keep in cabinet ministers we support (Thao Leuam) and try get out politicians with dishonest reputations (Katay).

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1559. Secret. Repeated to Paris, London, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC.

[2] Documents 285 and 292.

[3] In this airgram, December 18, the Embassy transmitted the text of an interview with Sisouk Na Champassak, who had been a member of the Lao Delegation to the United Nations, in which he praised U.N. and Hammarskjöld's handling of the Laos question. (Department of State, Central Files, 320/12–1859)

[4] The reference is in error and should be to telegram 1321 from Vientiane, November 11, which reported that Khamphan Panya gave Smith a firm assurance that Laos would not appeal to SEATO without prior consultation with the United States. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–1159)

[5] See Document 301.

[6] Dated November 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 315/11–1759)

[7] Dated December 11. (*Ibid.*, 651J.00/12–1159)

5. Statements and posture adopted to satisfy requirements paragraph 1 also fulfill this point.

Internal

(Here below numbered paragraphs Department telegram 1051 are referred to in parentheses following 991 references.)

6. (1) Here is sorriest showing of Lao leadership. While Phoui and virtually all LHL (albeit few Cabinet members and deputies somewhat reluctantly) ready to follow closely all essential points 1051, principals CDNI (except for one or two in Cabinet) and King adamant on support of positions which cause present division, instability and disunity. Reference 2–a and 2–b, CDNI–King opposed deferral of election until December 1960 and convocation National Congress to vote at least extension of Assembly.

7. (2–a–b) In pious defense constitution and democracy, CDNI–King insistence that assembly mandate and consequently life present Parliamentary government irrevocably must end December 25 really means after that date government becomes provisional and subject strictly to whim of King without any reference to parliamentary control—a situation as unconstitutional and undemocratic as could be imagined—even for Laos.

(2c) CDNI also opposed National Congress at this time "tinkering" with constitution, saying it preferred wait until after elections when "voice of people" could be followed by newly-elected deputies in thoroughgoing rewrite of constitution which would give King considerably increased powers.

(2d) Phoui's effort continue in reshuffled cabinet present LHL–CDNI–Army setup been thwarted by stubborn CDNI group discipline over perhaps most indefensible issue, i.e., retention Khamphan Panya as Foreign Minister. As late as December 13, Phoui for second time sought through individual meetings with CDNI members present cabinet work out solution. But his untiring efforts promote Lao national unity under his leadership so far thwarted by CDNI bloc tactics. No matter how logical in nation's interest Phoui's arguments CDNI place loyalty to group unity first. Though they freely give solemn assurances they all for Phoui as Prime Mininster, current tactics make it appear CDNI trying maneuver Phoui into King-appointed provisional government where he would be unsupported by lawfully elected Assembly and at mercy CDNI–King maneuvers.

8. Trial[8] postponed by RLG until early next year. Prosecution case may be stronger then and timing better. Parenthetically, CDNI–King pushing drastically harder line. One of their principal reasons oppose convocation national congress or assembly was desire keep accused

[8] Reference is to the trial of NLHZ leaders.

NLHX deputies from being seated and possibly being heard. Phoui had idea that giving them chance to talk, however circumscribed, would not only have helped show RLG not authoritarian but might also have cut into Communist propaganda reference trial and given opportunity CDNI relieve them legally of protection afforded by status under law as deputies.

9. Minority problem, while attracting greater attention lately from US agencies, still relatively untouched by RLG. One cheering note was recent [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] report [*document number not declassified*][9] that CDNI favors in new post December 25 cabinet creation of secretariat of state for minorities.

10. Training of FAL proceeding with celerity. General atmosphere full cooperation among Lao, French and Americans directly involved even better than anticipated and FAL units impress our trainers with their desire and ability to learn.

Smith

[9] Not found.

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304. Editorial Note

At the 429th meeting of the National Security Council on December 16, Allen Dulles reported on the situation in Laos as part of his usual briefing to the Council, "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." The report reads as follows:

"Mr. Dulles then reported on the reorganization of the government of Laos. He said the government has been a coalition of Phoui and the "Young Turks". After an impasse, Phoui had reorganized the Cabinet without the Young Turks. The King had been favorably inclined toward the Young Turks, but had accepted the new Phoui government. Mr. Dulles felt that these developments may mean that the anti-Communists in Laos are split, although it is still too early to tell. In addition, the question of the legality of the Laotian parliament has raised a constitutional problem which, although not too serious, is unfortunate." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, December 16; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

305. Memorandum for the Files by the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson) and the Officer in Charge of Laos Affairs (Chapman)[1]

Washington, December 18, 1959.

SUBJECT

SEA Recommendations on Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Section 6 of Vientiane's Telegram 1300, Nov. 8, 1959[2]

We carefully studied the above-noted paragraphs and concluded as of mid-December that no further action by the Department was necessary with respect to these paragraphs. The following points were considered:

1. Ambassador stated we should ensure that no impression of dichotomy in US policy continued. Our 1051 of November 13,[3] as well as instructions conveyed through other channels, stated our agreement with this and made recommendations on methods of dissipating any such impression.

2. The Embassy recommended that we make it unmistakably clear to Phoui and the CDNI that the US government had no intention of supporting an unconstitutional authoritarian government established under CDNI control by coup or Royal decree. The above-noted communications authorized the Ambassador to make clear the US Government position on this point and the Ambassador in a series of telegrams reported in some detail on the manner in which he had acted on this authorization by discussions with leading RLG political and military figures. We learned that the Prime Minister obtained the King's approval of an all LHL Cabinet. While the possibilities existed that dissatisfaction of the Army, the CDNI and the King with this Cabinet could inspire a coup, it seemed clear that these elements knew that the US would be strongly opposed to it. Under the circumstances it did not appear that we needed to address any further instructions to the Ambassador on this point, unless future developments indicate some additional scope where US action in the rapidly changing Lao political situation became necessary.

3. The Ambassador recommended that we make it clear to Phoui and the CDNI that the apparent failure of the CDNI to cooperate in implementing Phoui's reform program raised serious doubt as to the probity, wisdom and sincerity of CDNI aims. We thought this not entirely justified and did not consider that we should authorize the Ambassador to make such a statement at that juncture.

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[1] Source: Department of State, EA (Laos) Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1959. Top Secret.

[2] See footnote 2, Document 288.

[3] Document 292.

4. The Ambassador stated that the CDNI must be persuaded really to try to make the conservative front government work and that only if we could obtain without further delay their cooperation in trying to make the government work effectively until an election could safely be held could we justify continued insistence that the CDNI remain in the government. We recommended an approach whereby the Ambassador could endeavor to ensure such cooperation by the CDNI. Events which led up to the formation of an all LHL Cabinet apparently overtook that recommendation on which the Ambassador presumably did not have an appropriate opportunity to act.

5. The Ambassador recommended that the CDNI must be made to realize that under no circumstances would the US accept or support any government established by them through the use of force. We repeatedly emphasized (in our telegrams Nos. 1051, 1095, 991)[4] the importance of unity and constitutionality. It should be clear from this that the US would be strongly opposed to the concept of establishing a government through the use of force.

6. The Ambassador recommended that we authorize the Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to make Phoui recognize he must assume stronger leadership and instill discipline in his government. We gave such authorization in several messages including those referred to in paragraph 5 above. It seemed fairly clear moreover that Phoui had been doing his best in this respect.

7. Ambassador stated that only a confident Phoui fully supported by us and other friendly powers could prevent Laos from falling. The confident Phoui seemed to have emerged and as a matter of fact, we seemed to face the problem of whether Phoui might not have become too confident of his power and ability to overcome all domestic opposition.

8. Conclusion:

In so far as we have considered it advisable, we supported recommendations made by the Ambassador in paragraphs 2 and 3 of section 6 of 1300. Events were moving so rapidly in Laos that no further action based specifically on 1300 seemed necessary or desirable.

DA
CC

[4] Documents 295 and 285.

306. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 19, 1959—7:12 p.m.

1274. As we read your recent messages such as CDNI Communiqué (your 1674)[2] and attempt to assess significance of recent political developments, especially recent formation of LHL Cabinet by Phoui certain questions come to mind. We would appreciate your response[3] within 24 hours of receipt of this message giving us your best personal judgment re following questions and possible actions regard thereto. Because of delicacy of sitaution Dept leaves to your discretion whether consult your own immediate Embassy Staff but requests you to give no hint this evaluation is in progress either in your country team discussions or most particularly in contacts with any Lao:

1. Is it not likely that CDNI and FAL (perhaps abetted by King) either as individuals or groupings may not take recent action lying down but may soon retaliate with political maneuver or some form of coup tactic?

2. If this assumption sound, do you think King may be party to plan? How do you explain his calm acquiesence to new Cabinet composed largely of Deputies he despises (your 1578)[4] unless he had plan to remove it in near future perhaps in accordance his and CDNI interpretation of Constitution?

3. Do you think Phoui himself may have loaded dice by setting up obvious weak shell of Cabinet to invite Royal intervention after December 25 either with his own future participation or without?

4. In view fact CDNI and FAL contain elements of future strength we cannot and should not disregard, do you believe our best role may be to stand discreetly aloof and let nature take course in order preserve our influence and freedom of action?

5. Alternatively do you feel some strong appeal should be made to King to ensure he will not condone action such as violence to eradicate NLHX prisoners which would gravely damage Laos international position and might provoke Sino-Soviet bloc reaction?

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1959. Top Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Parsons and Steeves, cleared with SEA and Dillon, and approved by Parsons.

[2] In telegram 1674, December 17, the Embassy transmitted a translation of a CDNI communiqué which presented legal and constitutional reasons that the mandate of the present legislature would expire on December 25, that the convocation of the special National Assembly on December 17 was illegal, and that the power to form a new government should revert to the King after December 25. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–1759; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] *Infra.*

[4] See Document 301.

6. Would it be in our interest and consonant with para 1, Embtel [*Deptel*] 1051[5] if King were to resolve impasse by orderly Royal intervention under constitution resulting in government more or less representative all anti-Communist groups?

7. If appeal to Crown deemed advisable what could we do to strengthen your hand and make U.S. position clear and acceptable? Following choices might apply:

a. Special written message from Washington to King for you to deliver without prior consultation with anyone.

b. Special emissary to Laos to lend force of new approach accompanied with appropriate drama.

c. Bring you home or outside Laos to some rendezvous to receive special orders.

Realize this tough order to fulfill but would appreciate your prompt reply.

Dillon

[5] Document 292.

307. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 21, 1959—3 p.m.

1718. Reference: Deptel 1274.[2] In my best personal judgment (answers numbered according questions reference telegram):

1. It is possible but now appears unlikely CDNI leaders and their adherents in FAL may soon attempt retaliate with major political maneuver or some firm coup tactic. Since statement reported Embtel 1674[3] principal CDNI leaders have all except Sopsaisana indicated privately they have no intent attempting take over government on December 25 but instead intend cooperating in jobs outside Cabinet being offered by government. There has been considerable activity among CDNI military officer adherents under leadership of General Ouan, but he maintains and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] all believe he simply moved to be sure that General Sing's efforts

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2159. Top Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution Outside Department.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] See footnote 2, *supra.*

to alert certain units to prevent a coup did not make it possible for Sing himself to organize a coup. However, though unlikely, and [*it*?] possible both CDNI and Ouan may merely be covering, in view of our firm opposition to coup last Janury, intent to move in response to King's request they expect after December 25. Phoui when I talked with him before receipt reference telegram did not think so (Embtel 1712).[4]

2. Only possible, however, if King party to plan. Doubtful that King now prepared openly contest decisive assembly interpretation constitution. Seemingly calm acquiesence to new Cabinet believed due King's frank recognition Phoui had clear right under full powers change his Cabinet as he wished. Phoui's agreement relinquish full powers concurrent opening special assembly session and his prior announcement that elections would be held soon according electoral law could have been significant factors in King's terms Saturday's assembly interpretation electoral law present government would continue until elections. Believe King may be confident elections will sweep present assembly and government out of power. Even Khamphan admits privately that assembly is interpreter of constitution and as he forecast, assembly did support constitutionality continuation mandate present deputies until April elections at least. If King determined to take issue with entire LHL at this time presumably he could still attempt maintain assembly action unconstitutional and [garble] different Provisional Government to prepare for elections in April. I now consider more likely he might attempt such action when Phoui government some time after December 25 requests him to call National Congress to postpone elections and extend mandate until December 1960 or later but Phoui confident can persuade him (Embtel 1712).

3. I do not think Phoui himself has loaded dice by setting up obvious weak shell of Cabinet for Phoui considers this stronger Cabinet than either preceding two because is relatively united. He could hardly have made private deal with King while Katay, Pheng Wong Savan and Bong Souvannovong present and my judgment is that he would be unwilling participate in a different Provisional Government set up by King [garble] present government unless we insisted.

4. I do not think our best role would be to stand aloof and "let nature take its course" in a coup whether royally directed or not, despite any future potentials of strength CDNI and their FAL supporters may have to offer. To do so after representations we made under Deptels 991 and 1051 would cause disastrous loss prestige and reputation for meaning what we say, painfully acquired during July August

[4] In telegram 1712, December 20, Smith reported the main points of a general discussion he had with Phoui on the morning of December 20 concerning the political crisis over extension of his government. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/12–2059; included in the microfiche supplement)

September 1958 blocking of aid; and furthermore continuation present government does not mean loss future potential strength of small number really valuable personalities in CDNI and Army.

5. I do believe we should be prepared to make strong appeal to King, if appears he about take authority into own hands, to insure that he will not condone actions such as violence to eradicate NLHX prisoners or restrict liberty or constitutional privileges of LHL and their conservative supporters. In other words I believe we should be prepared to warn King we are not prepared support unnecessary violence or coup by unconstitutional or illegal use force. Believe I should immediately be authorized to warn Army and CDNI firmly but quietly to this effect now, and to repeat to His Majesty later if necessary.

6. Obviously it would not be in best interests US for King to intervene. There will be no impasse now unless King creates it. We now have promise of maintenance stability and continuity and even possibility of development of a new unity under Phoui's leadership of present government if only King and Army can be persuaded to let him convene a National Congress to vote a year extension of Assembly and postpone elections until at least December 1960. Any intervention of King now against present government would be to move against US objectives. Phoui is determined to support and salvage for Conservative Front all elements of CDNI and Army leadership that are really worthwhile and reliable in interests Laos as US sees them. However, neither he nor LHL will again permit them, without voters mandate, to occupy Cabinet positions in which they can again at will paralyze government action desired by majority of Assembly by their "united" blocking tactics. As individual civilian or military officers he will give them every reasonable opportunity but will not help them into positions where as members rump political gang can make ruthless partisan war weakening effective conservative unity against Communists.

7. As to best method strengthening my hand and making US position clear and acceptable, I believe position already made crystal clear to all factions except that CDNI, Army and King may still have belief we would passively accept unnecessary violence against NLHX coup against legally constituted LHL government. Therefore urge I be specifically authorized make clear to Army at least and to CDNI and King if it appears necessary that we would find any effort to block or overthrow by force present legally constituted Government of Laos as being contrary to maintenance stability, unity and continuity dictated by national interests of Laos and that such action would call for immediate drastic reconsideration of extent to which continuation of our support was wanted.

It does not appear necessary to consider sending special emissary or bringing me home for special orders at this time although depending on developments here it seems likely it may become desirable to consider bringing me home on consultation some time after middle January when trend present government becomes more fully apparent.[5]

Smith

[5] The Department sent the following brief response to the advice in this telegram in telegram 1283 to Vientiane, December 21, as follows:

"Seems we may have gone about as far as we can with prudence without seeming to 'Mother' Lao domestic affairs. Should developments suggest further consideration of approach to the throne we will advise. Further comments will follow." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2159)

Smith replied in telegram 1740 from Vientiane, December 22, that he concurred and observed that there were few, if any, signs of a possible coup at present. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2259) Both telegrams are included in the mirofiche supplement.

308. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 22, 1959—8 p.m.

1758. ReDeptel 1274,[2] 1283[3] and Embtels 1718,[4] 1740.[3] Chief PEO Heintges has just reported conversation on plane en route Vientiane to Pakse this morning where ceremony opening new rifle range and weapons demonstration took plce in which Ouan told that CDNI–Army plan to threaten Phoui tomorrow with a bloodless coup unless he and his government go to Luang Prabang December 26 and resign. Being reported more detail separate telegram[5] but indicated coup has been being carefully planned in greatest secrecy by CDNI and Army sympathizers at least since early November. Ouan said he would warn Prime Minister tomorrow of consequences if he does not resign on 26th. Ouan had made arrangements prior his departure for Col. Oudone Sananikone to request appointment for him with Phoui on 23rd. If Phoui refuses appointment CDNI plans go ahead with

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2259. Top Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution Outside Department. Received at 1:22 p.m.

[2] Document 306.

[3] See footnote 5, *supra.*

[4] *Supra.*

[5] Telegram 1759 from Vientiane, December 22. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2259; included in the microfiche supplement)

coup. If Phoui refuses interview tomorrow CDNI will assume that this means Phoui will refuse to resign. Heintges quite sure Oudone Sananikone fully informed and therefore able to indicate significance of interview. Heintges questioned Ouan repeatedly with regard to possibility bloodshed; Ouan insisted that if coup made necessary [by?] refusal LHL government resign, would be bloodless. Ouan absolutely certain that he will have control all elements FAL at time regular Saturday night meeting of Senior Officers Association which normally attended by all key senior officers. Ouan senior officers, where any dissidents will be safely put under control. [*sic*]

Ouan absolutely sure that King will insist Phoui form new government if present government resigns. Heintges received clear impression that King has positively guaranteed that he would ask only Phoui form new government, and Ouan emphatically emphasized that they wanted Phoui to remain as Prime Minister. Ouan stated that CDNI wished seven places out of fourteen in this cabinet and this would include Minister Defense Ounthone, Mininster Interior Phoumi, Director of Military Affairs in place any Secretary State Defense Gen. Bounthieng recently graduated from Leavenworth. Col. Oudone Sananikone also being offered portfolio.

When Heintges asked what they would do if Phoui simply renamed present cabinet he said he would have no objection to any of them being included in government except that he intimated Katay would have to leave Ministry Interior but because of his importance would be retained in a minor portfolio. Ouan insisted to Heintges that CDNI was not trying to take over government, that there are certain people in government who have no right to be there, have only self interest and are not interested in country but trying to stay in power by unconstitutional means. First unconstitutional thing Phoui had done was to try to shift Khamphan Panya from Foreign Affairs to other portfolio; second to form new government so near end of government's term; third attempt to prolong government beyond December 25. Ouan indicated that if not unconstitutional at least attempt remove Khamphan from Foreign Affairs portfolio had been attempt contrary to Lao governmental tradition.

In further questioning by Heintges Ouan admitted that formation of government so late in session perhaps not unconstitutional but also against Lao tradition. While in Pakse CHPEO had opportunity to discuss situations in the regions with third and fourth regional commanders who indicated that there would be operations conducted beginning December 25 of minor nature which Heintges interpreted as indicating certain security measures to be taken in region possibly being associated with coup. Heintges present during dictation this telegram and believes covers high points conversation. Heintges explained Ouan had always been exceptionally frank with him. This is

outside contingency which my assessment indicated possible though unlikely. I asked [*ask*?] authorization to warn FAL, CDNI leaders against coup. Inasmuch this not granted, Department's guidance most urgently sought.

Smith

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309. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 22, 1959—7:49 p.m.

1295. 1. Your 1759[2] confirms our earlier analysis that CDNI–FAL probably with King's active encouragment will not accept continuation new government beyond December 25. In light this situation following guidance provided which you should follow unless instructed otherwise.

2. In considering political situation we increasingly concerned over apparently inexorable trend our becoming involved ever more deeply internal Lao affairs. We face very real danger being so committed that we become scapegoat for all ills and target all grievances while at same time losing with all factions measure of influence we have so far enjoyed.

3. In what is essentially struggle for power, interpretation of Constitution has become central issue. It appears opinions of King and CDNI on one hand and Phoui and LHL on other are seriously held and deeply felt. (We note Constitution is silent as to what institution has power of interpretation.) For us to inject ourselves into this issue on either side would almost certainly be strongly resented. Moreover it questionable degree to which we can in fact influence situation.

4. Wish also to recall formula advanced our 1051[3] was only suggestion which appeared to us reasonable compromise between factions but that formula could be adjusted if it served insure cooperation

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2259. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Chapman; cleared with Steeves, Anderson, and Parsons; and approved by Dillon. Repeated to London, Paris, Manila, Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 6, *supra*.

[3] Document 292.

(Deptel 1081).[4] Essential objective in our view remains preservation of unity all anti-communist elements. Responsibility of division which has occurred must be shared by Phoui. The apparently impending palace-endorsed action to change government may be way for Lao achieve degree of unity of anti-communist elements where Phoui has failed.

5. It is Department's conclusion therefore that our long-term interests would be best served if we now step aside and permit Lao to work out new relationship among themselves. Rather than take sides in immediate internal political tug-of-war, you and your staff should save your influence to effect reconciliation of opposed factions and encourage them devote their energies to essential problems of Laos. If your opinion on present political problem is requested you should state interpretation of Constitution is Lao affair and confine your concern to those actions which may have possible serious international consequences. This would include first of all sensitive issue fate of jailed NLHX leaders. We oppose violence or bloodshed on this as on other issues. If Lao engage in untoward excesses, it is US as Laos' strongest friend whose interests would be deeply involved. Lao leaders should therefore exercise greatest prudence and restraint.

Dillon

[4] In telegram 1081, November 19, the Department of State clarified its instructions on U.S. support of the anti-Communist factions by stating that it did not insist on the specifics of the formula advanced in telegram 1051. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1859; included in the microfiche supplement)

310. Memorandum of a Conversation, White House, Washington, December 23, 1959, 11 a.m.[1]

SUBJECT

Laos: Government Crisis

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Acting Secretary Dillon
Director of CIA, Mr. Dulles
General Persons

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2359. Secret. Drafted by Parsons. On a copy of this memorandum, *ibid.*, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199, a marginal notation indicates that Dillon approved it on December 29.

General Goodpaster
Assistant Secretary Parsons

Mr. Dillon told the President that in Laos there was a fast-moving situation which might lead to a coup d'etat and which we had been following very closely. He then described developments there along the lines of the talking paper dated December 22,[2] leading up to the latest information which is that the Chief of Staff of the Army may present today to Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone an ultimatum designed to effect a change of government on December 26 when the Deputies' mandate will have expired. He explained that the rift between the anti-Communist LHL party of Prime Minister Phoui and the anti-Communist CDNI, affiliated elements of the Army and, we understood, the King, had come to a head over the question of how to interpret the Constitution in regard to the Deputies' mandate and the life of the Assembly. As it was the King who was originally the source of the Constitution, he would seem to have some right to interpret it. Mr. Dillon went on to explain that under Phoui's interpretation and resultant plans, elections were proposed for April, pending which the present government would continue in power.

The President commented that it would seem to be desirable to get Phoui's reaction to General Ouane's ultimatum as soon as possible. The Acting Secretary said we expected to get further word today. The President then remarked that it might be a good idea to set the elections right away, thus resolving the basis of the difference. Mr. Dillon pointed out certain practical difficulties involved, to which Mr. Parsons added that following Communist infiltration and subversion last summer the situation in the countryside made the Lao shy away from elections just now. Mr. Dulles added that he thought the conservative groups would wish to patch up their differences and try to present a unified front before holding elections.

Mr. Dillon then said that faced with this delicate internal situation we had thought it best not to intervene but rather to stand aside and let the Lao work out their own relationships. We would, however, exert our influence against violence and against anything which might provoke outside intervention and we would, as opportunities come along, urge that matters be resolved in an orderly way. The President remarked that this seemed sensible and said that he approved the line we had been following.

Mr. Dulles and Mr. Parsons then withdrew, leaving Mr. Dillon to take up several other subjects.

[2] Printed below.

Attachment

LAO POLITICAL SITUATION [3]

1. Since August 1958 the Lao Government has been headed by Prime Mininster Phoui Sananikone. It was intially composed of members of the Rally of the Lao People (RLP), the major Lao party, and of the Committee for the Defense of the National Interests (CDNI), an association of young, relatively better educated non-Parliamentarians both civilian and military. In January 1959 a number of Army officers close to the CDNI were included.

2. We consider that the RLP, CDNI and Army are the only politically significant anti-Communist groupings in Laos and therefore believe that their unity is essential to the stability and continued progress of the Lao Government.

3. The Phoui Government achieved notable successes in tackling some of the major problems left pending by previous governments: monetary reform, village aid and training the Army. The Government's progress was stopped by the fighting of the past summer. In fact, we interpreted the insurgent action as an effort by the Communists to preserve their apparatus in Laos and counter the progress which the Government was making in winning over the countryside.

4. While the Government was able to obtain real results, there always existed the sub-surface friction between the old politicians of the RLP and the younger members of the CDNI and Army. In this dispute the King has always sided with the CDNI and Army and has been most critical of the RLP.

5. This friction has now come out into the open. On December 15, Phoui formed a new Cabinet composed wholly of RLP members excluding all CDNI and Army participation. The Assembly (controlled by the RLP) has endorsed this Cabinet.

6. The visible issue which brought matters to a head centers on an interpretation of the Constitution. The King, CDNI and Army consider that the mandate of the present legislature will terminate on December 25, while the RLP has approved Phoui's position that the deputies' mandates may be extended to the next election, scheduled for April 1960. We now have information that the CDNI and Army will present Phoui with an ultimatum requesting him to resign on December 26; if not, the Army will take the necessary action to bring about the appointment of a new government. There is reason to conclude that the King would support such a move.

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[3] Secret. Prepared by Chapman. Attached to the copy of the memorandum cited in footnote 1 above.

7. We do not believe that an eventual coup would result in bloodshed. We have made clear that Lao leaders should take into account possible international consequences of internal actions. We consider that our interests are best served by avoiding becoming too involved in this situation and by permitting the Lao to establish new relationships among themselves. We have so instructed our Ambassador.

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311. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 23, 1959—2 a.m.

1762. Department pass DOD niact for ACSI. Embtel 1759.[2] Following based on limited distribution discussions reference telegram with DCM and chiefs political section, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] USIS and Army Attaché:

1. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] checks with leading elements civilian and military members excluding General Ouane indicate no knowledge alleged coup plan. Can not overlook possibility Ouane statements true, but being carried out without knowledge CDNI central committee. It would seem highly unlikely if plan is true, that Ouane would give Prime Mininster 48 hours notice during which he could prepare counteraction employing military units allied with him. Therefore, we feel one of followng three estimates most realistic:

A. Ouane deliberately made coup statements to Heintges knowing they would be passed to United States Embassy and expecting Embassy to inform Prime Minister which would result aggressive move on Prime Minister's part and then excuse counteraction on part of Ouane, which would place FAL in position to turn back full powers to King.

B. Statements could be merely another example of Ouane's boasting as he has done in numerous occasions during past two years. More than likely Ouane has actually prepared plan to counter any military action on part of Prime Minister or General Sing, but that in speaking to Heintges he enlarged upon it imaginatively as is frequently his practice.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2359. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Repeated niact to CINCPAC for POLAD and to London, Paris, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Bangkok. Received at 5:39 p.m.

[2] See footnote 6, Document 308.

C. Ouane has plan of action to support King in event King declares assembly and government expiration as of December 25, which many CDNI members still hopefully feel may occur.

2. In view possibility that this mere effort at provocation on part of Ouane to entice Phoui into attempted repressive actions recommend that I be authorized to make appointment see Prime Minister late afternoon December 23 to ascertain indirectly whether Ouane in fact had presented ultimatum requesting Prime Minister resignation. If Prime Minister does not attempt move up appointment or then gives no indication of such having occurred I desire keep entire subject quiet and not discuss with Prime Minister lest we fall into Ouane's trap.

3. However, chance Ouane really intends going through with ultimatum, strongly urge I be authorized have Heintges inform Ouane immediately that he had double checked with me on what would happen if army attempted to bring present government to end on or after December 25 by threat or use of force and that he had found my instructions were to immediately suspend all military assistance payments and deliveries if this happened and that Heintges felt in best interests FAL he should warn Ouane of inevitable consequences before he took proposed step.

4. In view position taken recently with CDNI, FAL and King under Deptel 991 and 1051, assuming Ouane's statements may be true, we do not feel that United States Government can now stand idly by and permit Ouane, presumably on behalf FAL–CDNI and King attempt achieve by threat force what they have been unable to accomplish by legitimate constitutional means. While we have little fear that Phoui would bow to such an ultimatum we feel it must be avoided if we are to hope for real conservative unity in next elections. Furthermore, unless we react strongly and promptly, the neutralists and much of friendly world might well believe true obvious resultant Communist charges that this an American supported move to get anti-Communist extremists and Army back in control.

5. Please advise niact.[3] Embassy, ARMA, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] PEO continuing discreetly check all contacts likely knowledgeable.

Smith

[3] See footnote 3, *infra*.

312. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 24, 1959—11 p.m.

1784. Reference: Deptels 1295,[2] 1298,[3] Embtel 1779.[4]

1. Re paragraph 2 reference telegram 1295. While I am also increasingly concerned over apparently inexorably increasing US involvement Lao internal affairs and this concern principal motivation Embtel 1500,[5] Embassy can not see easy way out since any sudden withdrawal now would scarcely preclude our becoming "scapegoat for all ills". Present planned step-up UN role and in Britain and other lateral [*bilateral?*] aid may help reduce extent US will continue be "target all grievances".

2. Re paragraph 3 1295, constitution is not "silent as to what institution has power interpretation": Article 44 constitution clearly states: "it is incumbent upon National Assembly to interpret definitively text of constitution" (*il appartient en dernier ressort a L'Assemblée National d'en interpreter le texte*"). This clause forms part of original constitution and not been nullified by amendment.

3. I seized opportunity conversation morning December 24 (reference Embtel) make clear to Prime Minister along lines paragraph 4 reference telegram 1295 that "formula advanced" to RLG by Department was intended only as suggestion "which appeared to us reasonable compromise between factions" that "could be adjusted if it served ensure cooperation." I further stressed (paragraph 5 1295) that any "interpretation of constitution is Lao affair" and that, bearing in mind principal goal was achievement unity, if Lao found it necessary disregard temporarily some details of the constitution it was US view that would be up to Lao themselves. We were naturally interested in all major internal developments in Laos but particularly concerned over any that might have unfavorable international repercussions and said

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2459. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to London, Paris, Manila, Saigon, Bangkok, and Phnom Penh.

[2] Document 309.

[3] In telegram 1298 to Vientiane, December 22, sent in response to telegram 1762, *supra*, the Department noted that telegrams 1762 from Vientiane and 1295 to Vientiane crossed in transmission. In telegram 1298, the Department added a clarification to telegram 1295 (Document 309). It stated that the situation was "too confused to warrant any direct action on our part. We could very easily take misstep which would rebound to our ultimate disadvantage and embarrassment." Therefore the instructions sent in telegram 1295 "must stand as guidance." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2259)

[4] In telegram 1779, December 24, Smith reported a conversation with Phoui on December 24. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2449)

[5] See footnote 2, Document 300.

that "first of all this would include sensitive issue fate of jailed NLHX leaders". "We oppose violence and bloodshed on this as on all other issues. If Laos engages in untoward excesses, it is we as Laos' strongest friend whose interests would be deeply involved." I said I felt sure he understood it was never intended that Lao Prime Minister himself or any other Lao leaders should feel bound follow to letter these suggestions; submitted for study and consideration only in effort help Laos maintain its independence from Communist domination.

4. I will of course continue carry out Department's instructions promptly and meticulously. Nevertheless felt obliged invite attention fact in Embassy's opinion Department's estimate that "responsibility of division must be shared by Phoui" is not fully accurate assessment, except for his unfortunate and now highly regretted press statement, in that Prime Minister to our certain knowledge made tremendous effort in response Department's 991 and 1051 during crisis to conciliate all groups and most particularly CDNI. Even now he appears [have] intention so doing. From here difficult fully understand Department's continuing unstinted though largely unrewarded support CDNI, some key members of which patently pursuing and have pursued personal not Lao national interests and certainly not those of US despite fact that as directed Deptel 1081[6] I personally kept our "views forcibly before them".

5. We have now carefully "stepped aside" to "permit Lao work out new relationship among themselves" but I am still hoping that, if his hand not forced by FAL, Phoui will even now be able succeed in working out democratic and constitutional solution free from dangers to us of arbitrary rule by Royal decree.

However fear CDNI, having now ascertained no US reaction to carefully calculated revelation to Heintges, will no longer hesitate force Phoui's hand.[7]

Smith

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[6] See footnote 4, Document 309.

[7] Smith amplified this argument in telegram 1785 from Vientiane, December 24, and stated that it seemed certain to him that Phoumi and Ouan, having ascertained no firm U.S. reaction to Ouan's revelation to Heintges, were now planning a coup on December 26 or 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2459; published in the microfiche supplement)

313. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 25, 1959—11 p.m.

1798. Pass ACSI. Deptel 1302.[2] I consider it most important we conceal our exact knowledge so far in advance of CDNI–FAL plan. I will be greatly surprised in event coup actually comes off if British, French and Australians here, if they learn that we knew about this so much earlier this week and let it happen without either warning Phoui or stopping FAL, will not find it full and incontrovertible evidence of the dichotomy of US approach they have long suspected. In view known close relations [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] CDNI and PEO and FAL and of complete financial dependence of FAL on US aid, they can hardly be expected to believe we could not have stopped it if we had wished and as they currently and fully briefed they will recall terms of our official advice to all factions. They knew and approved Phoui's actions under his program to bring harmony among conservatives in accordance with our advice. They knew that CDNI flew squarely in face of our advice but nevertheless appeared to continue to be supported.

While Heintges assures me that General Ouan does not know that he passed his revelations on to me I feel sure Ouan and Phoui both assume that he did and it seems possible they might even use with Phoui the argument that he might as well join them since we let him down and supported them by knowing of plot and not warning him or stopping them. Even if they do not use this argument Phoui and rest of deputies who represent parliamentary mandate could hardly be blamed if in the future they are skeptical re advisability of ever again following solemn US advice when it is inconvenient politically and personally. However, I am sure Department must have weighed all three possibilities before instructing me and my staff stand aside, and my problem now if Phoui does not compromise and coup comes off as planned is simply that I would appreciate instructions re lines Department wishes me and my staff to follow in our off-the-record remarks to Lao, UN, and foreign missions here re (1) our position before,

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2759. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated priority to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, and London. Received at 1:55 p.m.

[2] In telegram 1302, December 23, also addressed to London, Paris, CINCPAC, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Bangkok, the Department of State informed these posts that Department officers had met separately with British, French, and Australian representatives to inform tham about the potential change in the government in Laos. Department officials used the instructions in telegram 1295 to Vientiane, Document 309, as the basis of their explanation of U.S. policy. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2259; included in the microfiche supplement)

during, and after coup, (2) our appraisal present situation. Embassy must be prepared explain its apparent about-face in manner which best protects US interests.

Smith

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314. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 25, 1959—9:27 p.m.

1308. Vientiane's 1793 and 1797.[2] In view confused status of alleged "takeover" by FAL Department fully realizes extreme delicacy of situation facing you. It difficult determine what steps might be taken at this moment. However, it appears to us that most constructive step now would be for you seek audience with King. If you concur, you authorized seek audience and couch presentation along following lines:

1. Ask King for his assessment of current situation in order for you give clear report to your Government.

2. Reiterate US desire that Lao settle their own internal difficulties but our deep interest in their fortunes understandable.

3. As events in Laos have become of world-wide interest internal developments carry international consequences which have to be taken into account. We feel confident therefore His Majesty will use his high position in moderating action to maximize continuing support of all friends internationally and minimize opportunity for exploitation of situation by enemies of Laos.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2559. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Steeves, cleared with SEA and Merchant, and approved by Steeves. Repeated to London, Paris, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1793, December 25, 2 p.m. Vientiane time, the Embassy invited the Department's attention to an intelligence report that a coup against Phoui began at 9:30 a.m. Vientiane time on December 25. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2559)

In telegam 1797, December 25, 9 p.m. Vientiane time, the Embassy stated there was "no coup today." The Embassy also reported that the FAL considered the Phoui government "illegal as of tomorrow" and had asked Phoui to issue a proclamation ending the Assembly's powers. The Army, police, and much of the civilian government were refusing to take orders from the Phoui government and therefore he was expected to resign. If he did not do so in 3 days, the CDNI and FAL would force him out. (*Ibid.*) Both telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

4. You should emphasize again that in eyes friends of Laos most stable basis for RLG would involve greatest feasible collaboration between LHL, CDNI and FAL.

5. FYI: In making your appeal to King re point 4[3] you may assure him that the US is not protecting or fronting for any individual, group or faction, and by same token not lending our influence to bring about anyone's rejection. Lest he surmise we acting subtly to oust Phoui you may use such names as Phoui, Phoumi as illustrating strong elements which we could only hope would be welded together in common cause. Other outstanding representatives from LHL, CDNI and FAL will of course come to mind. End FYI.

6. You should inform your British, French and Australian colleagues of your démarche to King in order to keep them fully aware of our efforts and our line of argument.

Merchant

[3] As reported in telegrams 1834 and 1838 from Vientiane, both December 28, Smith was unable to make the points suggested above to the King because he was denied an audience. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2859) Earlier, Smith reported in telegram 1806, December 26, that he was able to see Kou Abhay, President of the King's Council, on the afternoon of December 26 and presented to Kou Abhay the four points. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2659) The Department of State responded in telegram 1316 to Vientiane, December 27, that Smith could at his discretion inform Phoui as well. (*Ibid.*) In telegram 1822 from Vientiane, December 28, Smith reported that he had informed Phoui of the four points. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2859) All these telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

315. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 28, 1959—8:53 p.m.

1324. Time precluded immediate response to your 1798[2] amidst other pressing operational matters Christmas Day. Department however believes your reftel requires comment.

On day your 1759[3] was received indicating possibility of coup steps were taken immediately to preclude very erroneous assumption

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2859. Top Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Steeves and Parsons, cleared by Anderson, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD, Paris, London, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, and Saigon.

[2] Document 313.

[3] See footnote 6, Document 308.

which you consider probable if coup consummated. British, French, Australian colleagues were called in and given full briefing on basis current information from Vientiane and we shared with them our estimate and judgment as to best course of action. Colleagues were read practically in toto instruction sent you in Deptel 1295[4] which was repeated to all capitals concerned so that no one in possession of facts could be under any misapprehension or in dark with respect our policy (Deptel 1302[5] and separate message to Canberra[6]). Our colleagues in Washington made privy to instructions recognized possibility very point you raise but were without exception convinced we were taking right stance and that if our posture of silence might one day be interpreted as Machiavellian gesture in favor of coup this would merely have to be met when and if it raised its head.

It should also be recalled that question of interpretation of constitution was major issue in this crisis and that resolution could be achieved either by coup or by compromise. Given nature of Lao and past experience we thought latter somewhat more likely.

In making decision re appropriate posture and action we have had to keep clearly in focus that our objective is a non-Communist government in Laos with which we can work. We cannot get into business of irrevocably committing USG to individuals, groups or factions if in doing so our flexibility and freedom of movement in any set of circumstances in Laos are lost to say nothing of our influence as well when our favored individual groups or factions defeated. As you know we have been supporting all anti-Communist groups in various ways and urging unified effort on all.

There has been no "about face" apparent or otherwise unless our refusal to back Phoui as an individual through thick and thin come what may is interpreted in that fashion. For us to have endorsed course of action which you suggest we might have done by bringing pressure to bear on FAL and CDNI would have been evidence to them that our interest in retention of Phoui at all costs was objective rather than preserving as much anti-Communist unification as possible. In circumstances you described we considered degree of intervention in Lao internal affairs which was apparently required to be both inappropriate and dangerous to our future position in Laos.

While we have no personal quarrel with Phoui—quite contrary—and have meant every word we have said with respect to our support for him this must always be on assumption that as Prime Minister he could contrive some means lead a government which could work vigorously insure security and will bring Laos security in this critical

[4] Document 309.

[5] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[6] Telegram 252 to Canberra, December 23. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2359)

period. It clear that formation of weak LHL government and subsequent Assembly action brought on volatile and unstable situation beyond influence of any outside power to control. Under these circumstances Department could not commit US to intervention on behalf of individual who although in our opinion best qualified in Laos was seemingly unable to rally the right support. We could not make empty threat of cutting off support to other non-Communist elements for in pursuance our overall interests we could not have carried through the threat without the most dire consequences.

Our 1308[7] reiterates general principles for presentation to King. If his action results in retention of Phoui in some acceptable coalition it would in our view be all to good but if majority of Lao leaders including King do not find this acceptable we naturally must acquiesce. We shall continue to keep these points as clear as possible before our free world friends, especially those with whom we work most closely, and can only expect they will accept our reasons for retention of this position as being in best interests of what we are all trying to bring about in Laos.

Herter

[7] *Supra.*

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316. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, December 23–28, 1959.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

A bloodless coup in Laos has been expected as the result of a conversation between Army Commander Ouane and a member of the U.S. training mission.[2] According to the plan, Ouane was to tell Phoui on December 25th that he should resign. If Phoui were to refuse, the Army and CDNI would oust him. This was from the first viewed with some suspicion as being either boasting or an attempt at a provocation

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.
[2] See Document 308.

to lure Phoui into taking repressive action to truly justify such a move by the Army. Throughout this matter the US has been making every effort to stand aside.

Actually the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI) apparently delayed the coup in order to give Phoui further time to resign. However, on 26 December, the Army indicated plans to ignore the Phoui government's orders presumably on the ground that the government is no longer legal with the expiration on 25 December of the National Assembly's mandate. Also on 26 December, the CDNI presented some demands to Phoui which resulted in his agreeing to ask the King's approval to allow the present government to resign and be reappointed in a caretaker status. The CDNI would not participate. The King's attitude is apparently that Phoui must remain regardless and he has rejected Phoui's suggestion that he and his government withdraw. Phoui told Smith that he has concluded he, himself, should remain at the helm of the government, thereby conserving the chance of saving the law of democratic regime to "conserve unity."[3] The issue can only be described as unresolved.

[Here follows material unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[3] The paraphrase and quote (inexact) are from paragraph 7 of telegram 1819 from Vientiane, December 27. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2759; included in the microfiche supplement)

317. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 30, 1959—8:07 p.m.

1340. 1. Your 1860[2] indicates we may expect early change of government. While it impossible predict composition new cabinet, we

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2959. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by SEA and WE, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Paris, London, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 1860, December 30, Smith reported as follows:

"Have just learned authoritatively that King sent General Phoumi to see Prime Minister Phoui late yesterday afternoon to tell him that King now prepared accept resignation government as offered in Cabinet meeting December 28 (paragraph 2 reference telegram) and that Phoui went Royal Palace last night and apparently received confirmation because on return to office Phoui dictated letter of resignation for consider-

Continued

agree with French (Paris 2925)[3] to extent that "radical change" might carry international consequences which need be mitigated at earliest opportunity. We would hope therefore that, very soon afer new government sworn in, its Prime Minister or Foreign Mininster would make public statement that traditional Lao policy of peace and neutrality remains unchanged. Such declaration will be important in direct relation to extent of CDNI–Army participation in government. There would be no objection to spreading word among different groups even in advance of resolution of crisis that US regards reaffirmation of Lao posture as an early must. Such action would have collateral advantage of counteracting any assumption on part of CDNI or others that US giving tacit encouragement to radical change in Lao policies.

2. While crisis may be working its way to solution, we still hold USG cannot take sides on constitutional issue between friendly non-Communist factions. In particular to counsel Phoui to defy King would be in Department's opinion not only inappropriate but also highly impractical. We of course hope that energies of Lao leaders will not be much longer deflected from critical problems of country which it is their responsibility to face as patriots. In present confused situation we must let Lao work out own course and adjustments take place appraise most effective way to continue to help Laos progress and ensure its security.

3. You may impart philosophy this stand as you deem proper to Lao leaders of all coloration personally and through most trusted channels. It would be helpful if our position could be planted in manner to reach King. You may also reassure Phoui, if need be, that as he knows full well USG has not and does not encourage or support use of military force to effect political ends.

4. Inasmuch as your 1857[4] made reference to possible influences emanating from Bangkok and Saigon, would appreciate comments from these sources.[5]

Herter

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ation Cabinet this morning. Cabinet now meeting." (*Ibid.*, 751J.13/12–3059; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Dated December 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2959)

[4] Telegram 1857, December 29, contained a report of a conversation on that morning between Phoui and Smith in which Phoui stated that King Savang had charged he was cooperating with the Vietnamese Government to overthrow the Lao monarchy. Phoui said that Savang, encouraged by Phoumi, was attempting to use Thai influence to counter Vietnamese presence in Laos. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2959; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Telegrams 2053 from Saigon, December 31, and 1757 from Bangkok, January 1, 1960. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3159 and 751J.00/1–160; both included in the microfiche supplement)

318. Editorial Note

On December 30, Phoui Sananikone and his Cabinet submitted their resignations to King Savang Vatthana stating that it was impossible for them to continue to conduct the affairs of Laos. On the next day the Chief of the Lao General Staff, General Sounthone, on behalf of the "Supreme Command Armed Forces," announced that the Lao Armed Forces would maintain order and security until a legally-constituted government was set up. During the early morning of December 30, the Lao Army occupied the principal public buildings in Vientiane and surrounded the residence of the King. In a second communiqué on December 31, the "Supreme Command of the Armed Forces" announced that its five members, Generals Sounthone, Sing Rathanamay, Ouan Rathikoun, Amkha Soukhavong, and Phoumi had been received by the King and had been instructed by him to maintain order and security within Laos. In subsequent communiqués, the Supreme Command declared that the powers of the National Assembly and its mandate had expired after December 25, 1959, and all acts of the Assembly after that date were null and void. The texts or summaries of the texts of the communiqués on and after December 31 were transmitted in telegrams 1905 and 1921 from Vientiane, January 2 and 4, 1960. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–260 and 751J.00/1–460)

IV. LAO POLITICS BEFORE THE STORM, JANUARY–AUGUST 9, 1960

319. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 2, 1960—10 p.m.

1904. For Cumming and Parsons only from Ambassador. In private talk with me afternoon December 31 Phoui spoke at some length of "Lao-French conviction that CDNI–military would never have dared execute coup had CDNI–army elements not been encouraged by certain US groups in Laos." According Phoui, his informants learned directly from CDNI and military that Generals Phoumi, Ouan and CDNI leaders, particularly Khamphan and Sopsaisana, had assured those of them who in past weeks expressed fears US support of CDNI and US military aid would cease in event takeover by threat of force that "US Ambassador only American backing Phoui government and that former would receive orders to ask new government as soon as formed what additional aid it desired." "For past few weeks rumors also rife Vientiane that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] has throughout crisis been guiding CDNI friends from [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] nearby, that CDNI to avenge Ambassador Smith's dismissal of [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] had determined have Ambassasdor Smith shipped out as soon as new CDNI–military government formed." Phoui confessed he himself had wondered whether such rumors not essentially true. (I explaned to him again that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] had not been dismissed but had gone in normal rotation. Phoui merely remarked that [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] had made no secret of fact that he had not been due to leave for another two months.) Another story widely circulated by CDNI–military, Prime Minister said, was that "US aid granted by Congress not by State Department or Ambassador Smith; therefore Lao had nothing to fear from not following advice either latter."

Phoui stated it absolute fact, not third hand, that General Amkha recently asked General Phoumi in front of other Generals how he expected US continue military aid if Phoui government ousted under

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files. 751J.00/1–260. Top Secret; Priority; [*distribution indicator not declassified*]. Received at 12:04 a.m., January 3.

military pressure? "Soldiers, he said, if US disavowed Generals' action, would not be paid or fed and would soon desert." Phoumi replied he had had "solemn assurances not from Ambassador Smith but from US authorities Vientiane most directly concerned[2] that aid would go on regardless Ambassador Smith's contrary recommendation and, in any event, FAL had on hand 3-month advance allocation funds." (Queneau served as interpreter throughout conversation.)

I am transmitting above telegraphically because somewhat parallel accounts given Embassy officer by British and French intelligence based on various sources other than Phoui indicate they also believe CDNI–army must have considered they had sufficient assurances "not from Ambassador but from special services [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]" that US aid would continue regardless any action they might take against legitimate constitutional government. While too polite to say above British and French Ambassadors have clearly indicated not only to me but to Embassy officers that they feel warning that US aid would be suspended or strong intervention by UNSYG now only effective methods ensure avoiding dire consequences extremist actions CDNI left unchecked by friendly powers. Both Ambassadors remarked however that they did not consider it proper for them to suggest that US aid be suspended and therefore expressed intent concentrating on efforts to get SYG to supplement whatever individual or joint démarches US, British, French, Australian Embassies here may be authorized make.

Smith

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[2] In telegram 1906 from Vientiane, January 2, [*distribution indicator not declassified*] Smith assured Parsons and Cumming that he did not believe that this reference was to PEO. Smith reported that Heintges had informed him that he favored an official warning to Ouan and Phoumi that U.S. military aid would be suspended if they took military action against a legitimate Lao government and that he had already informally warned them. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–260; included in the microfiche supplement)

320. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 3, 1960—5 p.m.

1911. Department pass information ACSI. Reference: Deptels 1339[2] and 1340.[3] In pursuance directives reference telegrams, have today passed to General Sounthone as chief of staff and General Ouane as president of the CDNI and commander of the FAL the following:

"Late December 30 the Department of State became concerned over reports emanating from non-American sources that the situation in Laos was rapidly deteriorating with the following rumors in circulation:

1. On the assumption of power by the CDNI American aid to Laos would be increased.

2. Prince Souphannouvong and his fellow detainees would face summary trial and execution.

3. Drastic changes in Lao foreign and domestic policies would ensue.

The American Ambassador is directed that, if indeed such stories are gaining currency, he brand as a falsehood any rumors that the U.S. aid program would be increased if a new government came into power.

The USG, of course, does not credit these stories, which might well destroy the basis of US and UN support for the RLG, but the American Ambassador is nevertheless also directed to lose no opportunity to inform the CDNI and FAL leaders that US reaction to any such drastic measures would be most severe. The USG counts on Lao leaders to recognize that irresponsible behavior on the part of anyone purporting to act in their name could be most damaging to the future of the Kingdom, for such action would almost certainly bring in international repercussions under the most unfavorable circumstances.

In view of the strong rumors of 'radical changes' about to take place, the USG regards an early public reaffirmation that the traditional Lao posture of peace, neutrality and moderation remains unchanged to be in the best interest of [garble—all?]. It is the view of the USG that it is highly advisable that this be done even in advance of the resolution of the present crisis. If there is any mistaken assumption that the USG is giving tacit encouragement to radical changes in Lao policies, it must be corrected and any Lao leader who appears to fail to

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–360. Secret; Priority. Repeated to London, Paris, Bangkok, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 1:30 p.m.

[2] In telegram 1339, December 30, 1959, the Department of State transmitted to the Embassy a report of the rumors described in telegram 1911 and instructed the Embassy to inform the CDNI and FAL leaders that they were false and that the U.S. reaction to drastic action would be severe. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–3059; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 317.

recognize that the USG has not and does not encourage or support the use of military force to effect political ends should be clearly assured that this is true as should already be known full well.

While it is hoped that no one has really misunderstood the position of the US, the situation now appears so confused in some respects as to warrant this confidential clarification by the USG, which hopes that the energies of the leaders of Laos will not much longer be deflected from the critical problems of the country for it is their responsibility as patriots to face them."

DCM accompanied by ARMATT left informal "pour-mémoire" with each of them in French covering above points. Other three army Generals and other members CDNI central committee being read "pour-mémoire" as soon as they can be reached. British, French and Australian colleagues also furnished copies.

French Ambassador seeing Sounthone and at least two of other four Generals at Sounthone's 1530 this afternoon. Gassouin as dean diplomatic corps received letter this morning from Sounthone dated yesterday in which Sounthone stated that "I am charged with informing you that until new government is named, powers of government will be assumed by army. Please inform all chiefs diplomatic and consular missions". Gassouin plans ask whether there has been royal ordinance this effect and if not what is basis his authority. Furthermore, Gassouin will pass through him request for substantive audience with King in addition protocol farewell audience already requested directly.[4] Gassouin will also tell Sounthone and his companions of French Government's concern that King should know possibility that SEATO might not be able to respond to an appeal resulting from situation provoked by purely internal developments in Laos. Doyen will also attempt impress Generals with concern of his British, Australian and American colleagues over possibility any drastic changes in Lao policies. British Ambassador had already attempted unsuccessfully through military attaché to get word to Sounthone his concern over possible action against Souphanouvong and other detainees but believed his ARMATT's efforts reach General Ouan with some message this morning must have been successful.

Colleagues meeting my residence 1800 hours to learn results.

Smith

[4] On January 4 at 10 a.m., French Ambassador Gassouin met with King Savang and made a joint démarche on behalf of French, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States against possible radical changes in the Lao Government and policies. After a half hour, Ambassadors Smith and Lincoln and Australian Chargé Gardner joined Gassouin and the King. (Telegrams 1916 and 1918 from Vientiane, January 3 and 4, and telegram 1362 to Vientiane, January 3; all *ibid.*, 751J.00/1–460) A more detailed account of the joint discussion is in despatch 239 from Vientiane, January 8. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–860) All these documents are included in the microfiche supplement.

321. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, January 6, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

After some maneuvering back and forth, Phoui's resignation was finally accepted by the King on December 31st. The Army immediately moved to occupy key points in the city of Vientiane. Acting as the King's authority the Army was currently running the government pending formation of a new cabinet, with General Sounthone as Chief of Staff. Smith told Sounthone and the CDNI (Committee for Defense of National Interests) President, General Ouane, on December [*January*] 3rd, that U.S. reaction to drastic changes in Laotian foreign and domestic policies would be severe.[2] There is some fear that the new Laotian government will try the NLHX (Neo Lao Hak Xat)[3] leaders. The British Foreign Office is taking a tough line with the Laotians on this and has told them they should not act contrary to the Geneva Agreement. Sounthone has said that his committee is not a government, but that a government will be appointed soon. The King has indicated that he recognizes the close relationship between international [*internal*?] developments and international reactions. He claimed that neither the CDNI nor the military wanted to be in a government, but since they object to the LHL (Lao Hom Lao—former PM Phoui's party), a third force must come forth.

The French are very much concerned since the military earlier had not concealed their determination to execute NLHX leader Souphannouvong, imprison unfriendly Assembly deputies, and call on SEATO for help.

John S.D. Eisenhower

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] See *supra*.

[3] Successor organization to the dissident Communist Pathet Lao Party. [Footnote in the source text.]

322. Editorial Note

At 10 a.m. on January 7, King Savang named a "provisional government" to organize the next general elections in Laos. The Cabinet members in the new government were: Kou Abhay, Prime Minister; Nhouy Abhay, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Education and Fine Arts; Ngon Sananikone, Minister of Justice, Cults, Sports and Youth; Khamphan Panya, Foreign Minister; Thao Leaum Rajosombat, Minister of Finance, National Economy and Agriculture; Nouphat Chounramany, Minister of Information, Tourism and Social Affairs; Tiao Somsanith, Minister of Interior; General Phoumi Nosovan, Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs; Chao Souvath Sayavong, Minister of Health; and Oudong Souvannavong, Minister of Public Works, Plan, Transportation and Communications. (Telegrams 1953 and 1956 from Vientiane, both January 7; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/1–760 and 751J.00/1–760, respectively)

In telegram 1387 to Vientiane, January 7, the Department of State provided the Embassy with its "preliminary analysis" of the Abhay government: "On whole, Cabinet is able, honest and one we can work with. Prime Minister is not forceful but respected and well liked." (*Ibid.*, 751J.13/1–760)

The Embassy responded in telegram 1969 from Vientiane, January 9, that the breach between anti-Communist elements in the new government was still "profound." The Embassy believed that the top Lao military leadership was disgruntled at its lack of representation in the Abhay government. The Embassy added that the task of holding new elections required unity and teamwork by conservatives. (*Ibid.*, 751J.13/1–960)

Telegrams 1387 to Vientiane and 1969 from Vientiane are included in the microfiche supplement.

323. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 11, 1960—7 p.m.

1980. For Cumming and Parsons. Reference: Embassy telegram 1969.[2] As stated reference telegram Embassy considers still may be possible for conservatives win majority of seats against NLHX and fellow travelers in next elections provided deep rift caused by recent crisis can be healed in time and single conservative front with single list candidates agreeable to King, Phoumi and Phoui and their principal supporters can be developed soon enough.

I do not believe rift can be healed soon enough or single list developed and necessary redistricting and reformation electoral law done soon enough for democratic victory, if elections held mid-May 1960 as now apparently most likely, unless we intervene strongly to insist upon guide and support such actions. Even if elections are postponed until November or December 1960 present deep rift must be healed quickly and a unified single front formed and all ablest conservatives put to work without delay in an intensive unified campaign or conservative pro-West elements cannot be expected to win against NLHX which is product of ten years of grass roots organization. Certainly they cannot win if personal grass roots influence, tactical skill and political experience of abler members of LHL cast aside or ineffectively utilized by King.

As of December 30, 1959, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] estimated CDNI had little influence in large areas of country and no assured electoral support. They considered and I agreed CDNI had hoped through army use threat of force on its behalf to be allowed to play an increasing role in government administration and to thus in time acquire electoral support. We are nevertheless also in agreement that army through its psychological warfare units and six-man teams and other efforts has helped local branches CDNI to make promising beginnings in some provinces, particularly in those where they have been willing to cooperate with provincial LHL and that while not by any means universally liked army has in many areas a potential to assist importantly in realizing a conservative victory not only by insuring security in particular area but by providing transportation and other facilities and by effective six-man teams and psychological war

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–1160. Top Secret; Priority; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

[2] See the editorial note, *supra*.

backup with electorate. I am convinced that real teamwork between LHL, FAL and CDNI supporting a single list under strict discipline of a single joint central election committee basically guided by some of experienced LHL hands who have actually won elections in past is an early must if we are to expect conservative victory in elections under management present government.

If Department approves I would therefore recommend that Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] be authorized to feel out discreetly probable practicality of developing an aggressive [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] US political action program to be carried out with roughly following objectives:

(1) To heal rift sufficiently to bring about immediate formation of joint national committee to dramatize, direct and control conservative candidates and to select and obtain all essential agreement on single list of candidates.

(2) To attempt if as likely is decided advisable, to persuade and guide government in revision electoral law to change from provincial to Muong groupings, each with single seat, and to so guide redistricting that chances conservative majority improved. In event single conservative list seems improbable of attainment in time then to attempt also obtain inclusion two-stage election provisions in revised electoral law.

[*Subparagraph (3) (1½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

I have prepared this [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] feel some such program should be developed immediately and launched soonest. We have numerous detailed suggestions to make but consider it inadvisable to attempt define proposals more precisely until we have had Washington approval for discreet feeling out of thinking certain principal conservative leaders.

Without benefit such "feeling out" we are nevertheless both strongly of opinion that to be successful committee should include both Phoui Sananikone and General Phoumi Nosavan and probably also Nouphat, Somsanith, Tianethone and Keo Viprakone as members and Pheng Phongsavan serving as chairman.

Smith

324. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 13, 1960—8 p.m.

2005. For Cumming and Parsons. Reference Embassy telegram 1980.[2] Am pleased to report that from conversation last night between DCM and Nhouy Abhay, Deputy Prime Minister, we may still be able to avoid intervening to extent which had previously seemed required to assure avoiding certain disaster in elections. If Nhouy's account reflects views Prime Minister Kou Abhay and King as it may because Minister Interior who was present throughout conversation did not demur, it would appear that Kou and Nhouy are already taking energetic moves in general direction which we had hoped to quietly inspire. While Nhouy hopeful that rift between LHL and CDNI can be healed and is confident that he and his brother can enforce unity in government [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] believe that quiet but strong and clearly-stated US encouragement to each of principal CDNI, FAL, and LHL leaders to cooperate fully will still be required if any such plan to bring about a united effort and a single slate is to succeed.

As reported in Embassy telegrams 2002 and 2004[3] Kou and Nhouy's plan involves development list 59 "government" or "national" candidates roughly one for each Muong selected not by a committee nor by Somsanith, who as Minister Interior will otherwise be in charge of elections, but by Nhouy and Kou whose selection could not be challenged as being either pro-LHL or pro-CDNI.

Individuals will be chosen who will really win their seats by popularity with their constituents. It will not be hard to find the 60. Each candidate will be given necessary funds and will take right approach which will be one of getting really close to people even though this may not necessarily mean having to walk to every village. Because candidates will be "government" and not party candidates they will enjoy far more prestige and chance of election. Minorities will be "treated like people," as Lao with no distinction being made. Nhouy referred frequently to his previous conversation with Ambassador Smith and DCM (memos conversation December 4 and 7),[4] to his

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–1360. Top Secret; Priority; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Both dated January 14. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/1–1460 and 751J.00/1–1460, respectively)

[4] Neither found.

brother Kou's radio speech (Embassy telegram 1978)[5] which Nhouy said must be read weighing every word. (Prime Minister had particularly emphasized personal "man-to-man" approach by members of government and their principal subordinates to villagers.) A registration will be undertaken which will provide registration cards "for all reliable Lao." Nhouy expects that PL elements will "take to bush" during registration and many of them already live in bush anyhow. Thus they will not have necessary registration cards when voting takes place. Establishment of security for villages is not a difficult problem for arms can and should be issued to more of the reliable villagers as soon as they have been distinguished carefully from unreliable ones. Nhouy felt that contrary to last elections it is not necessary and one should not attempt to distribute "dollar derived funds" to the people. Simple supplies and expense money and transportation are all that should be required.

I hope to see both Kou and Nhouy tomorrow or Friday and may get further indications of their thinking.

Smith

[5] Telegram 1978, January 11, contained a summary of an 11-minute address to the nation by the new Prime Minister, Kou Abhay, on January 10. Kou stated as goals for his government peace among the Lao, close communication between the government and the people, and improved standards of hygiene and living. In foreign affairs, Kou stressed "peaceful co-existence" and "viligant neutrality." As a final goal, Kou assured his listeners that he hoped to turn the government over to younger and more dynamic Lao leaders after the elections. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/1–1160)

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325. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, January 28, 1960—4:29 p.m.

1486. Would appreciate your comments on following analysis of present electoral situation:

1. Postponement of elections might enable RLG to concentrate on programs which would result in more favorable political climate for its candidates. However since Cabinet "provisional" and charged with carrying out elections, it is questionable whether it would implement

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2860. Secret. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by SEA and FE, and approved by Parsons. Pouched to CINCPAC for POLAD.

such programs with necessary vigor. Therefore on balance it might be preferable to hold elections sooner than later. (Recent reports indicate Cabinet showing considerable inertia. Unless it gets on with the job, it may find time has run out and may perforce postpone elections.)

2. To bolster RLG's international standing and undercut Communist claim that Lao people are anti-government, it seems RLG would be shrewdly advised to permit NLHX and other opposition candidates to run freely but keep leaders under arrest. NLHX would then be in difficult position of either a) refusing to run or b) presenting their second team. If a) RLG could make point that NLHX too weak and not representative; if b) victory by government candidates would underline RLG's popular backing as against that of NLHX.

3. We agree with your view that manifestly unfair elections would reflect on RLG's good name and strengthen belief abroad that majority of population discontented and supporting rebels.

4. Rift among factions resulting from recent events appears preclude for time being merger we had hoped for. However as you know, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] we should seek every opportunity to encourage cooperation patriotic elements.

5. Since it also doubtful joint LHL–CDNI committee could agree on single list, selection of 60 candidates by Nhouy and Kou (your 2004)[2] appears offer best solution so far suggested to problem of creating single slate. Would King endorse their choice and would this procedure be acceptable to parties?

6. Since merger of anti-Communist elements at this time doubtful, maintenance of discipline will become serious problem and temptations to rig elections will become stronger. It therefore appears electoral law becomes of crucial importance and should be so written as to encourage unity anti-Communist candidates, give them maximum support and minimize chances of opposition. Our study of problem leads us believe draft electoral law drawn up by Nhouy but not approved by Assembly last December contains provisions which should permit achievement these objectives. Particular provisions of value: one deputy per electoral district; high bond required of each candidate; two-stage elections.

7. While registration of voters and issuance registration cards appear good in theory, we skeptical operation this scope can be successfully carried out and in any case believe it preferable NLHX run freely.

8. Since Lao leadership appears have clear idea problems involved and extent our influence questionable, believe we should avoid becoming too intimately or too conspicuously involved in these elections. We should rather preserve our influence to seek in collaboration other friendly powers to persuade Lao of advisability points made in 2,

[2] See footnote 3, *supra*.

3, 5, 6, and 7 above.[3] From Parsons' conversations in Paris, it appears we are in substantial agreement with French.

9. Separate message being sent by other channel.[4]

Herter

[3] Smith reported in telegram 2118 from Vientiane, January 29, that both Somsanith and Nhouy "expressed full concurrence" with these points. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Not found.

326. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, January 29, 1960—2 p.m.

2108. For Cumming and Parsons. During my dinner in his and Minister Information Nouphat's honor January 27, Vice Premier Nhouy directly requested me to "grant him a very special favor" (*une grace importante*), namely that of suspending all Americal moral and material support to Lao political parties as such, above all to the CDNI. As long as such backing continued, Nhouy asserted, it would be impossible for him to achieve his basic task of bringing about national favor among the Conservative forces. Once support from abroad eased, CDNI, LHL and Military would have to join together and work in harmony. Of course, he admitted, RLG would still need assistance from US if it was to win out at next elections but such assistance should be given to government-designated candidates and not to any party. To reinforce his argument, Nhouy cited one example from 1955 elections when Phoui was receiving assistance of over 3,000,000 kip from French, while Katay was obtaining an unspecified amount from US. Thus Nhouy's strenuous efforts at that time to get Phoui and Katay to team up were doomed to failure.[2]

I stated that, assuming Nhouy was making same request of other friendly missions here who might have been or may even still be providing backing to political parties in Laos, I would endeavor find out just what if any support was being accorded to Lao political parties at present time by US.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2960. Secret; [*distribution indicator not declassified*].

[2] The following marginal note appears on the source text in Parsons' hand: "Nhouy tried hard[?] to bridge the gap in my tenure. J.G.P."

[1 paragraph (2½ lines of source text) not declassified]

Smith

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327. Letter From the Ambassador in Thailand (Johnson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Bangkok, February 2, 1960.

DEAR JEFF: I refer to your telegram 1941 of January 30,[2] repeated to Vientiane as 14, concerning Sarit's relations with Phoumi, as well as to a letter of January 27, from Horace to me,[3] transmitting further information in this regard.

As you know, I thoroughly agree that it would be most unhelpful for Thailand to be working at cross purposes with ourselves in Laos and I have tried to do what I can to minimize this possibility. As reported in my telegram 1787,[4] I talked directly to Sarit with regard to the matter and in reply received nothing but full assurances of complete Thai agreement with us. However, Horace's letter, as well as other reports we have had, tended to confirm our suspicions with respect to Sarit's relations with Phoumi. The letter arrived very opportunely *[less than 1 line of source text not declassified]*. Against the additional background of the information contained in Horace's letter, we were able to let Sarit know that his relations with and support of Phoumi were becoming fairly widely known and matters of common gossip. While he did not admit to such relations, he did not flatly deny them and I hope that our additional statements to him will have an additional restraining effect. We will continue to take advantage of all opportunities to work in this direction but I believe that we should frankly recognize the probable limitations of what we will be able to do.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–260. Top Secret; Official–Informal.

[2] Telegram 1941 reads as follows: "No doubt you too have noticed various indications Sarit may be fiddling with Lao situation through Phoumi. This could be most unhelpful and we would welcome your continuing attention and any suggestions." (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–3060)

[3] The January 27 letter transmitted the text of telegram 2030 from Vientiane, January 16, which Smith pouched to Johnson in Bangkok. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/1–1660) The covering letter has not been found, but it is quoted extensively in Document 329.

[4] Dated January 5. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–560)

As you know, Jeff, there are potentially severe strains in our own relationships with Sarit; we are presently asking of him some additional very substantial things and we can expect increasing dissatisfaction on his part with respect to the aid program, DLF, etc. We are not, therefore, in a good position to attempt to turn the screws too tight on the Phoumi matter and I would be reluctant to do so unless it appears to be of clearly overriding importance and priority. As things seem to be developing in Laos, this does not, at least yet, appear to be the case.

In dealing with Sarit on this matter, we must recognize that, whatever we may think of it, Sarit will continue to regard himself as not only the actual but also the political Uncle and patron of Phoumi. There is a long-time close personal relationship there which he is going to maintain regardless of what anyone may think. On the basis of his success in Thailand, as well as the action of Ne Win in Burma and Ayub in Pakistan, Sarit is philosophically fully convinced that he has found the answer to problems of similarly situated countries and that the lessons are especially applicable to Laos which is even less developed than any of these other countries. No amount of argument on our part is going to change his views in this regard. However, he will be restrained in what he does to encourage Phoumi by his estimate of Phoumi's limitations and his fear of being "found out" particularly by "the UN". I therefore believe that our relations with him on the subject must continue to be based upon this fact.

As I see the present situation, Phoumi and the RLG have, in spite of the success of their "coup" accepted the reimposition of civilian government and it does not appear that they intend to challenge it for the time being. They are also accepting elections. I think it entirely unrealistic to expect Sarit to advise Phoumi to go beyond this and keep the army out of politics. To do so would be completely contrary to everything in which Sarit believes.

Therefore, the only course I see open to us is to continue to keep the best track we can of what Sarit is doing, exploiting whatever opportunities may present themselves to caution restraint.[5]

Sincerely,

Alex

[5] In an official–informal letter of February 25, Parsons agreed with Johnson's view of the Phoumi–Sarit relationship. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/2–260; included in the microfiche supplement)

328. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, February 2, 1960—9 p.m.

2134. Deptel 1486[2] and message by other channels,[3] with which Embassy [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in complete agreement, provided basis for presentation by me to Nhouy, Somsanith, Nouphat, Ngon, Phoui and Phoumi with detailed backup by staff yesterday and today with Nouphat, Ngon and Somsanith.

All found in agreement on (1) necessity single conservative list and confident its achievement; (2) advisability allow NLHX to run; (3) need minimize any manifestly unfair election procedures; (4) advantages in replacing province as electoral district having numerous deputies by smaller gerrymandered districts (based on combination Muongs or Tassengs) each with one deputy; and (5) practical impossibility implement in time any combined photograph registration system.

Only on two-stage elections and less on highway bonds was any dissent expressed. Phoui only one who did not need convincing on two stages. Though I managed impress Phoumi and Nouphat sufficiently to finally win their agreement this point, I am not certain they were sufficiently won over to wage any long and bitter battle in its behalf. Having agreed immediately after lunch with James, Ngon later confessed changing mind during sleepless siesta. Somsanith cool. Appeared unmoved despite reiterated DCM arguments.

Though criticism two-stage plan was expressed on grounds it clumsy, time consuming, expensive, basic objection appeared to be it unnecessary since combination gerrymandered districts, well selected candidates and single conservative list absolutely certain to win in sufficient districts to insure conservative two-thirds in assembly. What changed Ngon's mind was fear existence two-stage insurance factor would relieve pressure on anti-Communist bloc to unify tickets. Staff and I hammered point that if unified list as certain as predicted, and anti-Communist victory so certain, objection to two-stage procedure really illusionary since would then not need to be resorted to. We argued procedure should be considered insurance policy whose cost relatively low in proportion protection it would afford.

Comment: With Council of Ministers meeting scheduled for tomorrow afternoon under presidency of King to approve final draft new electoral law, last-minute shifts in position likely as consultations and

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–260. Secret; Priority. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 325.

[3] Not found.

negotiations continue between leading elements RLG and pro-government political groups. Since last Council of Ministers meeting, which set April 24 election date, also appears to have agreed in principle against two-stage procedure, we been forced wage uphill fight, with chances ultimate success not improved by indication from French and British they been limiting their emphasis to single list.

Smith

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329. Letter From the Ambassador in Laos (Smith) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Vientiane, February 11, 1960.

DEAR JEFF: In transmitting Embtel 2030[2] to Alex as authorized by Deptel 1475,[3] I noted in my covering letter of January 27[2] that I would be very much interested in any comments he might have on the matter and went on, "I might add that such information as we have tends toward corroboration of the rumors concerning Thai assistance to Phoumi who now is alleged, on relatively good authority, to have seven Thai advisers including three operating from his personal quarters, two from his office, and two more in intelligence.

"Last night both Deputy Prime Minister and another Minister who has been a lifelong friend of Phoumi's expressed concern over Phoumi's sudden affluence and over the manner in which he seems to be distributing funds in amounts beyond those provided in the military budget or for purposes outside the military budget.[4]

"It is not yet clear whether an attempt will be made to run any officers as candidates for the Assembly, but the Deputy Prime Minister told me last night that he had just come from a meeting with Phoumi in which the latter had assured him that no officers would be permitted to become candidates. There is still a question as to the timing of elections as Nhouy would like to set them in late November or early December and Phoumi and certain of his LHL colleagues, as well as CDNI colleagues, would like to see elections proceeded with as

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–1160. Top Secret; Official–Informal.

[2] See footnote 3, Document 327.

[3] Dated Janaury 25. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/1–2660)

[4] Reported in telegram 2101 from Vientiane, January 28. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/1–2860; included in the microfiche supplement)

quickly as possible. Some would like to see the new Assembly opened on the constitutional date of May 11, which would require April elections. Others would like them held as early as possible with a good chance of winning, in order to restore democratic parliamentary government as soon as possible. Considerable public dissatisfaction is reported concerning the behavior of the Army and even of the King during the recent effort to end the Assembly's mandate by threat of force and Royal support. A new Royal ordinance establishing electoral procedures for the forthcoming election is being actively discussed with possible reversion to provisions of laws governing the earliest elections held in Laos. Under the 1947 law as modified in 1955, balloting for all the remote villages was done by electors (*délégués*) with no more than three elected from each village. It is being maintained that although in the cities everybody would go to the polls under these laws, the system of electors for the villages would enable the government to control the elections much more effectively and have a good enough chance to prevent a Neo Lao Hak Xat landslide to make Spring elections possible. The decision however will probably rest largely in the hands of the King and may be taken within the next few days.

"I will keep you informed as best I can concerning developments here that are likely to be of background use to you in assessing their potential area-wide effect and in anticipating any reactions thereto that might be contemplated by the officials with whom you deal."

I have now received a copy of the letter Alex sent you on February 25[5] reporting his action and commenting on the matter. I wish to express my appreciation for the highly appropriate and well timed action taken. I am in complete accord with all of the comments Alex made. I do not believe that he should try to turn the screws at all tight on Sarit in the Phoumi matter, unless unexpectedly later developments make it of clearly overriding importance and priority. It appears probable that Phoumi as well as Sarit will remain "philosophically fully convinced that he has found the answer to the problems of similarly situated countries and that the lessons are especially applicable to Laos." No amount of argument seems likely to change their views in this regard but Phoumi was last January and again this January stopped from an allout effort to force his dictatorship on Laos. Last year he was stopped by the realization of our almost certain reaction and other indications that he could not yet hope to succeed. The second time it was the reaction of the King to Phoumi's too ambitious and rapid assumption of power with trappings that indicated he probably aimed at more than the brief interlude as planned by the King.

[5] Document 327.

I agree that for the time being it is unnecessary to go further with Sarit. Alex indicates that so long as Sarit is aware that any move he may make along this line will likely be "found out" by us and the UN, any assistance he gives to Phoumi is likely to be limited. I believe that every effort should be made to find a solution here in Laos and that only if these fail and as a last resort should any further attempt be made to approach Sarit on this subject.

I will, of course, be particularly careful in the meantime to keep Alex currently informed on the matter. Phoumi's actions during the forthcoming election will probably give us our best indications of his current intent and may even clarify his probable long-run intent.

Sincerely,

Horace

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330. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, February 17, 1960—7:42 p.m.

1582. State–DOD message. CINCPAC's 282200Z January.[2]

1. We have been considering what role Army might most usefully play in forthcoming elections. Following is our tentative thinking on which we would like your comments: a) Army's efforts could best be directed toward creating an environment of security permitting holding free and peaceful elections and of goodwill among people toward RLG. b) In so doing Army would be well advised stay aloof from becoming directly involved in elections and above all abstain from strong-arm tactics and similar activities. Such would be start toward long-term security objective and might give FAL officers goal and purpose in line their real missions.

2. CINCPAC comments as expressed reftel on six-man teams fully concurred in. Feel CINCPAC thoughts on six-man teams should apply equally to P&I unit operations. In this connection persistent rumors received here since September indicate beneficial effects of six-man teams and P&I operations may in some areas be largely offset by high-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/2–1760. Confidential. Drafted by Chapman and Bingham of the Department of Defense; cleared with O'Donnell of Defense, SEA, U/MSC, and Steeves; and approved by Parsons. Also sent to CINCPAC.

[2] Not found.

handed conduct on part Army. Therefore feel extended effort need be made to indoctrinate Army personnel in necessity and means of maintaining proper relations with civilian communities.

3. We are wondering therefore whether short, simple, and intense program could not be undertaken possibly using six-man rural security teams and P&I company personnel to indoctrinate volunteer battalions which are understood to be deployed in all Muongs and are primarily responsible for internal security their area. Type training indoctrination visualized is basic and simple and would consist demonstrations, skits and talks requiring minimum equipment and talent. Lansdale's memorandum on operations Viet-Nam contains information which may be applicable present situation.[3] Copy this memorandum previously furnished CINCPAC and USARPAC. Two copies airmailed PEO Feb 15.

4. Would appreciate ideas Country Team and CINCPAC and, if you believe above has merit, your recommendations re additional measures if any that should be taken to support Army for these purposes.

5. Question of availability and source of financing for such additional activities as may be recommended and approved cannot be considered until detailed recommendations received indicating type and scope of program, number and types of personnel required, and cost estimates including cost of material. As visualized here supplementary effort if any required from US would be relatively small.

Herter

[3] Apparent reference to a memorandum by Lansdale, February 12, 1960; *Foreign Relations*, 1958–1960, vol. I, pp. 279–281.

331. Editorial Note

On March 3 at the Secretary's Staff Meeting, Parsons reported on cooperation between the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency on formulation and implementation of policy toward the Lao elections:

"Mr. Parsons reported that the meeting with CIA representatives yesterday had prepared some proposed courses of action on the Lao elections which would be recommended to Mr. Merchant today. He noted the problem of dealing with Sarit in his effort to place Colonel Phoumi in a position of power. In answer to a query from Mr.

Merchant, Mr. Parsons said the new election law would apply to this election, with provision for a run-off in the event no single candidate gained a majority on the first ballot." (Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

Three days earlier on February 29, at the Acting Secretary's Staff Meeting, Parsons assured the participants that, "preparations for elections in Laos were almost complete, i.e., the Gerrymandering of the country had been arranged." (*Ibid.*)

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332. Memorandum of a Conversation, March 8, 1960[1]

SUBJECT

Record of Presentation by United Nations Secretary-General to the Secretary of State on Outline Plan for United Nations Technical Mission in Laos

PARTICIPANTS

Secretary-General Hammarskjold
Mr. Roberto Huertematte, Commissioner for Technical Assistance

Secretary of State Herter
Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge
Mr. James W. Riddleberger, Director, ICA
Assistant Secretary of State Francis O. Wilcox
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John M. Steeves

Introduction

A general statement describing the Secretary-General's attitude towards his proposal for Laos may be in order. His enthusiasm for his plan was impressive. Although the Secretary-General deferred to Mr. Huertematte to discuss the details of the plan, Mr. Hammarskjold interrupted him on numerous occasions, pointing out details of the idea and clarifying aspects of the concept, which was ample proof of his personal attention and keen interest. The Secretary-General has taken his responsibility with respect to Laos very seriously and has developed a very keen personal interest in it.

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[1] Source: Department of State, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Laos 1957–1961. Secret. Drafted by Steeves. The source text does not indicate where the conversation took place. On March 4, Dillon sent Herter a memorandum briefing him on possible expansion of U.N. economic and technical assistance to Laos and summarizing the report of the U.N. official, Sakari Tuomioja, on economic conditions in Laos. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 851J.00/3–460)

The key figure around which the Secretary-General is building his plan is King Sri Savang Vatthana. On a number of occasions he made specific reference to the importance of the King's attitude, his role, his reaction and his assurances. He counts heavily on the King's policy of neutrality and his adherence to the spirit of the Geneva Accords. His feeling of confidence extends from his visits with the King during the Secretary-General's visit to Laos in November and subsequent messages which he has received from the King.

The Secretary-General has taken one step which in his view will add stature and prestige to the King in Asia and that is to arrange for a visit of King Savang to India. He asked Mr. Narasimhan to take the matter up with Nehru, which he did. A favorable response was received to his démarche, and the Secretary-General understands that King Savang has accepted Nehru's invitation to visit India later this year. The Secretary-General commented in passing that he thought it would be good for Nehru too to have this contact with one who was facing a problem with the communists, to give him the other side of the picture which he was undoubtedly getting from the Chinese Communists.

Concept and Plans for the United Nations Technical Mission to Laos

Mr. Huertematte outlined the plan as it firms up in their thinking pursuant to the Tuomioja Report and Huertematte's own observations and recommendations.

Both Mr. Hammarskjold and Mr. Huertematte spoke at considerable length with respect to the imperative need for what they called "integration" in Laos. One of the objectives of the United Nations mission will be to achieve this. Laos in their estimate suffers from a variety of divisions. The Government in Vientiane does not get across to the people. The various tribes do not communicate sufficiently with each other. The effort, therefore, would be to facilitate contact and interdependence. One of the techniques which would be used in encouraging more intertribal association directed toward the development of nationwide acquaintance and unity would be to encourage trade between the various peoples.

The United Nations mission would consist of approximately thirty people. This would staff the unit in the capital under the direction of the Secretary-General's personal representative who would work as Technical Advisers to the various Ministries. It was pointed out that one of the key Ministries with which special efforts would be made would be the Ministry dealing with rural development, social and economic. Likewise, the Departments of Agriculture and Education. The Secretary-General said that in recruiting people from the specialized agencies of the United Nations, UNESCO for instance would be able and willing to cooperate with his personal representative in advis-

ing the Department of Education and he would likewise be likely to receive the same type of cooperation from WHO and FAO, although he had not had the enthusiastic response from the latter two offices which he had received from UNESCO. He was sure, however, that this would be forthcoming.

The rural segment of the team would consist of four groups or teams. These would be distributed strategically throughout Laos and would be comprised of experts to give advice in health, education, agriculture, economic development and local administration. By working with each other and the central representatives in Vientiane they would thus work for integration at the same time as they imparted their various skills to the local people. At this juncture, they implied mild criticism of the work that American-aided "six-man teams" were doing. They did not believe that they were very effective and that strictly community development was not contributing to the concept of developing more cohesion between the various peoples of Laos.

As we are, of course, aware the Secretary-General's designee for the position of personal representative is Dr. Zellweger, of Switzerland. He pointed out that this gentleman had been chosen with great care and on the advice of some of his most trusted advisers.

Considerable attention during the conversation was given to the need for cooperation and coordination between ourselves and the United Nations mission. Secretary Herter assured the Secretary-General that we appreciated the deep interest which the Secretary-General was giving personally to this program and assured him that the Department would cooperate with him to ensure that confusion and friction would be minimized and that our efforts would be complementary. This could be achieved by appropriate liaison here as well as exchange of views at the planning and operational level in Laos. The Secretary-General pointed out that some had felt that it would be well for the United Nations to coordinate if not actually supervise all aid in the technical field to Laos, but there obviously would be a great deal of difference of opinion on this subject and at any rate the United Nations was not prepared to assume this magnitude of responsibility. He felt that ad hoc consultation and cooperation between well-meaning people was quite possible without treading on each other's toes or duplicating effort.

Mr. Huertematte pointed out that during his visit to Laos in the process of his survey, he had received excellent cooperation from our Embassy ICA personnel and singled out Mr. Eisenberg as one individual who was doing a very good job and making the type of contribution in budget and fiscal administration, so much needed. Mr. Eisenberg had made a beginning in helping the Lao, for instance, to

improve their taxation system. This was one type of effort which should be continued by advisers to help the Lao realize revenues which were not now coming into the national treasury.

The Secretary-General did not initiate any discussion of the United States participation in the military and police training, nor was there any discussion of the communist threat or the over-all security situation. The Secretary-General at one point drew attention to the fact that in all of the communist criticism emanating from North Vietnam, the King was never singled out for criticism. This could have been a slight hint on the part of the Secretary-General to the belief which we understand he entertains that a détente under certain circumstances is possible between Laos and its communist neighbors.

Mr. Huertematte is leaving on Sunday, March 13, for Bangkok and the ECAFE meeting and said that he might drop up to Vientiane again on this trip. He was rather anxious to compare views further with Departmental personnel on the United Nations plan, but it was concluded that this would have to wait until his return, some time in April.

While the Secretary-General's presentation was enthusiastic and his reference to United States efforts was characteristically cordial in the broad sense, neither he nor Mr. Huertematte offered any opinion as to the value or effectiveness of the current United States program in Laos.

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333. Memorandum of Discussion at the 437th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, March 17, 1960[1]

[Here follows a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting.]

1. Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security

Mr. Dulles said he would first review the situation in Southeast Asia. A number of conditions had arisen in various Southeast Asian countries which, while not now serious, held promise of future difficulties. In other words, elements of softness had appeared in Southeast Asia. In Laos the Communists were no longer using the tactic of semi-overt invasion across the frontier. Mr. Dulles felt the UN action in publicizing Communist activities had been a wise one, but it had driven the Communists to adopt deep cover. The Pathet-Lao insur-

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Boggs.

gents, aided by the North Vietnam Communists, were consolidating their forces and expanding their influence in Laos. Widespread reports were being received of the build-up of these forces, of their intimidation of the population and of their exploitation of the grievances existing among the tribes. In addition to its control of two "pockets" in Laos (Luang-Prabang and Xieng-Khouang), the Pathet-Lao exercised de facto control over a widespread area of the countryside. Security enforced by the central government exists fully only in the cities, to a lesser extent in the towns, and not at all in the countryside. Increased Communist action against South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand is foreshadowed by the infiltration of Communists in the direction of these countries. A USIS team which recently tried to tour mountain villages in the Xieng-Khouang province was interrogated by uniformed Pathet-Lao forces and turned back. Mr. Dulles believed that the non-Communists could be persuaded to cooperate in putting up single candidates for the April election to the Laotian National Assembly wherever there is Communist opposition. The Communist electoral tactics during this election were not yet clear. The Communists may abstain from voting. Mr. Dulles thought the Laotian problem would continue to be a difficult one for a long time and was not susceptible of quick and easy solution. In summary, he believed the Communists were trying to gain their ends in Laos by subversion, guerrilla war and semi-legal means. Our military mission in the country was doing an excellent job in combating Communism. Secretary Herter said Mr. Hammarskjold had recently told him that the UN was sending a number of representatives into the Laotian villages and had also been asked to appoint advisors to a number of the administrative departments of the Laotian Government. Mr. Herter felt that a partial shift of responsibility to the UN was a favorable development from the U.S. point of view. Mr. Dulles agreed that the fact that UN representatives are watching over the situation in Laos is important.

[Here follow discussion unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Marion W. Boggs

334. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, April 8, 1960—6 p.m.

2563. Reference: Embassy telegram 2555.[2] As indicated reftel elections expected result in predominantly conservative Assembly but major hurdle of designation new premier and investiture his govt will still remain. Following supplements reftel and summarizes Embassy's assessment and attendant recommendations for immediate short run posture to help ensure post electoral difficulties at least reduced if not eliminated.

1. Neither CDNI nor RPL will have majority in new Assembly permitting easy investiture PriMin from either group. RPL furthermore divided into pro-Souvanna and pro-Phoui factions. CDNI also split into pro and anti-Phoumi factions and CDNI President Ouan wavering between old loyalty to Souvanna and present tie-in with Phoumi. Yet CDNI, RPL must necessarily join forces if long drawn-out investiture delays to be avoided which could only benefit Commies.

Recommendation:[3]

That Embassy continue urge wisdom electoral committee's persuading "extra" conservative candidates to withdraw in order bring total number down as close to 59 as possible. That Embassy continue push for closest RPL–CDNI collaboration, encouraging current RPL–CDNI negotiations for proposed merger into conservative national front which could far more successfully stand up against Commie and pro-Commie opposition and which would greatly enhance chances rapid formation new govt and its maintenance of an apparently solid front in test votes in Assembly with issues fought out ahead in party meetings with majority rule.

2. While Department may not wish actively engage in support any one of potential candidates for premiership cited reftel (Souvanna, Phoui, Phoumi, Nhouy, Somsanith) Ambassador's advice will undoubtedly be sought near future and consequently consideration should therefore be given immediately to the formulation by the Department of any limited guidance it may wish Ambassador to offer.

In meantime suggest (a) that we continue maintain present close contacts with all above personalities and endeavor determine attitudes other friendly missions here, particularly French and British. Depart-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–860. Secret; Limit Distribution.

[2] Dated April 8. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 1856 to Vientiane, April 15, the Department of State concurred with this recommendation. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–860)

ment at same time might wish discuss issue with British and French representatives Washington and suggest similar action by Embassies Paris[4] and London; (b) that Ambassador also continue indicate to RPL and CDNI leadership strong desirability ensuring that new RLG will adhere to present foreign policy and to implementation programs originally established by Phoui coalition govt, which programs have been virtually suspended since December coup.

Smith

[4] In telegram 4753 from Paris, April 12, the Embassy reported discussions with a French Foreign Ministy official who observed that the pre-election campaign was marked by the "normal dishonesty" typical of Lao campaigns. The French clearly preferred that Souvanna Phouma should become the next Lao Prime Minister. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/4–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

335. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, April 15, 1960—8:20 p.m.

1857. 1. Assume your analysis April 8 (Embtel 2555)[2] based on assumption Electoral Committee would be willing and able to produce single slate at least in districts where leftist candidates are running. Since Committee has not been able do so, it would appear Santiphab–NLHX have better chance win more seats than earlier forecast, thus making selection of Prime Minister from victorious non-leftist candidates more difficult.[3]

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–1560. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Erickson, cleared with SEA and FE, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Hong Kong, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[3] At the Secretary's Staff Meeting on April 11, Parsons informed Herter as follows:

"The Lao elections will take place Sunday week and even if there are substantial losses in controversial cases the Conservatives will undoubtedly triumph. There was some discussion of the possible candidates for Prime Minister and Mr. Parsons confirmed to the Secretary that Phoui was at the moment in a vulnerable position. He said that we are considering our position with respect to the possible candidates [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]." (Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

2. Your analysis also based on assumption FAL would not favor any one pro-RLG group during campaign and voting. Recent reports however indicate FAL very active in promoting CDNI candidates and deliberately seeking defeat certain RLP candidates including some ostensibly supported by Committee.

3. Believe RLP/CDNI/FAL coalition such as Phoui's "full powers" Cabinet best formula in free world interest and believe we must strive for this although will probably not be easy to form. If estimated strength Souvanna Phouma's RLP faction in next Assembly is confirmed by election, i.e., size his faction in next Assembly apt be larger than Phoui's, Phoumi's or any other CDNI favorite, we tentatively inclined favor alternatives A and D (with Phoui Sananikone in) your analysis, in that order as most desirable from viewpoint practicability and US interest.[4]

4. However rather than indicating support for candidate for PriMin at this stage believe we should reiterate our interest in seeing democratic and constitutional procedures followed in formation of new government. This approach would (a) hopefully eliminate General Phoumi as PM without our having to side with or against him (b) not alienate Phoui and (c) not require us take open position against Souvanna. If Souvanna were to be asked to form Government we would consider it of utmost importance to have strong elements Phoui faction and CDNI in Cabinet to prevent expected and typical effort by Souvanna move farther left than we believe in Lao national interest.

5. Believe you should continue maintain contacts political figures, especially Phoui, Souvanna and Phoumi.

Herter

[4] In telegram 2555 from Vientiane, April 8, the Embassy suggested some possible alternatives for the next Lao Government.

336. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, April 15, 1960—8:20 p.m.

1858. For Ambassador from Parsons. Reference Deptel 1857.[2] Supplementing reftel following points indicative certain reactions Lao electoral campaign which I share. You will note common element is once again Lao failure rise above narrow factionalism at time of crisis. While this frailty was anticipated, Lao leaders should realize that to extent they rise to occasion image of Laos in this country becomes such as to facilitate our support. Conversely, their failures jeopardize our ability to support Laos adequately.

1. Particularly in light failure to honor their commitment before 1958 election, failure not to prevent competition between conservative candidates in some thirteen districts where leftists are running creates deplorable impression.

2. Tendency to concentrate on formation next Cabinet before elections even held and composition Assembly determined likewise suggests failure concentrate on critical issue minimizing NLHX and their allies.

3. Certain indications that Phoumi may be maneuvering to defeat not only Phoui but other prominent political rivals possibly including even CDNI rivals is disturbing because, if true, he is working against national interest. Defeat of better known and pro-West Lao conservatives would cause poor impression here.

4. Possibility Phoumi's tactics are in anticipation Sarit-type control of Laos by FAL is not only distasteful from standpoint effect on Lao image in eyes various friends but also dangerously provocative of Viet Minh and bloc. Furthermore efforts by Phoumi toward this end might produce only chaos in view numerous reports that he lacks general support in FAL.

I am sure you will use your influence as appropriate with respect dangers and possible consequences inherent in above points. It will be hard to reserve our freedom to move in response to any one of numerous contingenices that could eventuate without at present abdicating some of our influence over electoral developments. Nevertheless I hope you agree that it would not be wise for us to commit ourselves to any particular solution unreservedly at this time and go all out to achieve it. I personally believe that despite our importance to Lao, our influence over internal political maneuvering is limited and that we

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–1560. Secret; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Parsons, cleared with Steeves and Anderson, and approved by Parsons.

[2] *Supra.*

can therefore usually best exert our influence as situations arise. We may then hope to exploit successfully our friendships with one or another individual or group.

Herter

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337. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, April 26, 1960—8:12 p.m.

1921. Department seriously concerned by indications elections have been so rigged as to invalidate them in eyes of world opinion. As noted your 2724[2] press has picked up story which undoubtedly will receive wide publicity. In international field 1) reputation of Laos for fairness will be damaged; 2) suspicion of many that RLG not supported by population will be strengthened; and 3) task of supporting Laos diplomatically and economically by its friends and particularly by UNSYG will be considerably more difficult. Sad aspect is that non-Communist candidates could have won clear victory in fair election thereby greatly reinforcing RLG's position.

You are authorized to make this assessment known in your own best judgment and as appropriate. Only chance Department sees of salvaging shred of reputation for these elections is for RLG to permit fair counting of returns in all districts where results not yet made public. We are calling in British and French to seek their support[3] and you might coordinate your approaches with your British and French colleagues.

Henderson

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–2660. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Chapman; cleared by Usher, Anderson, and Steeves; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, USUN, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Telegram 2724, April 26, reported on the election results and commented that the "results overshadowed by ugly developments reflecting on their veracity" and that the foreign press in Vientiane was aware of the story. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/4–2660)

[3] Reports of these calls, both on April 27, are in memoranda of conversation, April 27. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/4–2760; both included in the microfiche supplement)

338. Editorial Note

At the 442d meeting of the National Security Council on April 28, Allen Dulles gave his briefing, "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." He reported briefly on the results of the Lao elections as follows:

"In Laos, Mr. Dulles noted, conservative and anti-communist candidates won an overwhelming victory in the recent election. However, the Laotian Army probably became over-enthusiastic in several places and may have rigged the elections in some districts. Mr. Dulles believed the anti-communists would have won the election without any rigging. However, the organization of a new government would be difficult because the anti-communists, although united in opposition to communism, are split among themselves in all other matters." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, April 28; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

As of April 28, contests in 46 electoral districts were definitely decided and of the remaining seats, 4 required run-off elections and up to 10 could possibly be forced into run-offs. Of the 46 definitely elected deputies, 25 were members of the CDNI or closely affiliated to the CDNI. Of the remaining winners, all 21 were pro-government candidates. As of April 28, no Santhiphab or NLHX candidate was close to winning a seat in the Assembly. (Telegram 2736 from Vientiane, April 28; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–2860)

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339. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 2, 1960—7:47 p.m.

1961. Embtel 2766.[2]

1. Department still supports principle of merger of anti-Communist forces (Deptel 1856)[3] as you recommend. However we not clear how Lao leaders view "National Party" or "National Front." Suspect

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–3060. Secret. Drafted by Chapman; cleared by Usher, Anderson, and Steeves; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 2766, April 30, the Embassy reported a discussion with Ngon Sananikone on April 29 in which he suggested the formation of a national front by the CDNI and the RLP. The Embassy requested the Department's view of the idea. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnote 3, Document 334.

these terms may have different meanings to different leaders, notably Phoui and Phoumi ([*document number not declassified*][4] reports Phoumi thinks that front should be headed by Somsanith or Nhouy and that Phoui and Souvanna need not be included; Embtel 2738[5] indicates Phoui is working toward collaboration with Souvanna and appears confident that together they can dominate unified front). Problem therefore appears practical one of a) how merger is to be brought about and b) who is to be included (e.g. just deputies or all RLP and CDNI members past and present).

2. Issue not simply academic since it evident that neither RLP nor CDNI will singly be able to obtain working majority in new Assembly [*document number not declassified*][4] and that consequently new government will have to be based on both groups or factions thereof. Therefore it essential that there be created a majority in Assembly of sufficient strength and discipline to produce a government of competent members and assure its continuing stability. Such a majority perforce requires as broad merger of RLP and CDNI groups as possible.

3. Therefore while you should continue generally encourage unity of anti-Communist elements, Department would appreciate specific answers to questions para 1 in order to examine what further steps can be taken.[6]

Dillon

[4] Not found.

[5] Telegram 2738, April 27, contains a summary report of a conversation between Smith and Phoui Sananikone on April 25. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–2760)

[6] See Document 341.

340. Letter From the Ambassador in Laos (Smith) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Vientiane, May 3, 1960.

DEAR JEFF: In reply to Deptel 1920,[2] you have already seen our 2763,[3] which sought to provide such factual evidence as was available which might indicate those Americans who, in violation of Washington instructions, were taking a public line in Laos favoring specific candidates or factions in the new National Assembly. I enclose with this letter a memorandum prepared for me,[4] in reponse to your request, which seeks to comment further and which is based more on inference and impression than upon hard fact.

In my view, this immediate question takes us back again to the more general and long-term problem of how, despite Department instructions and my hearty agreement with them, we are later told by our Embassy political and diplomatic contacts that the impression is abroad to the contrary of the very line I and a handful of FSO's have been studiously following. While it may be, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that the "two-voice" charge is made by others deliberately and falsely in an effort to smoke out our "real" intentions, I am personally convinced that on the whole this situation has actually tended to develop, and interestingly enough, only at those times when [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] opinions have diverged over crucial issues; e.g., last December over the "constitutional crisis" and more recently, over what complexion the new cabinet should take.

[*5 paragraphs (1½ pages of source text) not declassified*]

Sincerely yours,

Horace

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 62 D 26, Smith. Secret; Official–Informal.

[2] In telegram 1920, April 26, Parsons expressed concern that U.S. officials in Laos were supporting a candidate for Prime Minister in contradiction to U.S. guidelines. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.13/4–2660)

[3] Dated April 30. (*Ibid.*, 751J.13/4–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Included in the microfiche supplement.

341. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 4, 1960—11 p.m.

2818. Ref: Deptels 1961,[2] 1969;[3] Embtels 2801, 2812.[4] In view developments which came to head here today indicating formation of new party by CDNI almost certain result in splitting rather than unifying conservative elements contrary to advice that has been consistently given to all elements under Dept's directives, I have consulted with French and British colleagues as to best answer to give to questions (a) and (b) asked in Deptel 1961 as to best manner solving practical problem with which we are now faced. Both my colleagues agree fully with point made paragraph 2 Deptel 1961 that "essential there be created a majority in Assembly of sufficient strength and discipline to produce a govt of competent members and assure its continuing stability and that for these purposes such a majority requires as broad merger of CDNI/RPL groups as possible."

Re question (b), I feel, and my colleagues also agree, it essential that merger include all conservative deputies willing to join but inadvisable complicate situation at present by inviting or encouraging participation non-Parliamentary elements. It is national front in Assembly as basis for continuing stability of govt during present 5-year term that is most vital. Provisions for appropriate polit party support in provinces to ensure continuation through next elections appears to be project which could better be postponed until after national front in Assembly is attained, although it is problem which will of course thereafter warrant early attention.

Re question (a), after many hours discussion all aspects of question and every indication of practical realities present situation and probable developments, we have each reached conclusion that only action we can recommend to our govts that might at this point again make a merger possible or at least prevent a disastrous split internally and avoid even more disastrous external reaction would be a parallel

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–460. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated to London and Paris.

[2] Document 339.

[3] Telegram 1969, May 3, reads as follows:

"British Embassy officer informs Department Lord Selkirk will visit Laos May 9 to 12 and will have audience with King. While FonOff realizes nature of any representations by Selkirk would depend on situation at time, it would like to have our reactions and ideas soon. Would appreciate your suggestions." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/4–2160)

[4] In these two telegrams, May 3 and 4, the Embassy reported on the deliberations of the CDNI, particularly its decision not to join with the RLP, but rather to test its support in the new National Assembly. (*Ibid.*, 751J.2/5–360 and 751J.00/5–460, respectively; both included in the microfiche supplement)

démarche along lines set forth below, which we suggest should be presented separately by three of us plus Australian Chargé to RLG FonMin for delivery to King followed by (1) approach by me to Kou Abhay as Prime Minister provisional govt informing him of action taken by me and colleagues with FonMin, explaining fully its significance and asking his assistance in seeing that it is presented promptly and adequately to King; (2) similar approach by French Amb with President King's Council and (3) by British Amb with Nhouy Abhay as Chairman Electoral Committee. In view difficulty arranging audience with Savang for presentation this type démarche, it is suggested by French Amb and agreed to by Addis and me that this would be best and perhaps only method of reaching King effectively by May 9, which now understood be date on which decision as to PriMin is scheduled be made by Monarch. We also all agreed that it is fortunate that due fact Lord Selkirk expects be granted audience with Savang during his visit here (Deptel 1969) probably May 12, it might be possible for him to follow up effectively and obtain direct reaction from King re our démarche.

Begin Verbatim Text

(1) Ref made to electoral results which have created unrest and protests within country and doubts and concern externally.

(2) In wake these results, there have been polit developments tending to ensure through tactic of exclusiveness a polit monopoly in favor leaders and principal beneficiaries of electoral operation.

This monopoly is doubly fragile since (a) it is based on contested electoral results; (b) does not by nature offer guarantees with respect security of Laos which must be founded on political equilibrium (i.e., neutrality).

(3) Internal state of Kingdom precludes monopoly benefiting one tendency or party and pushing all others together into position that may provoke explosive situation.

(4) Vulnerability of Kingdom in external sphere especially arouses fear of evolution of formula apt evoke strongest reactions.

(5) Duties of friendship, sense of special responsibilities and commitments with regard to Laos impose vigilance upon us and require us to express our views in this exceptionally dangerous situation.

(6) Only remedy for electoral results and only formula capable of preventing aggravation of internal situation and eventual external action, is national union consisting of participation in next govt by all tendencies represented in this newly elected Assembly on reasonably proportional terms agreed to by Exec Committees respective groups.

(7) Friendly govts bearing responsibility toward Laos are ready accord their support, maintain and improve their aid to such govt.

(8) They express their definite reservations toward any governmental formula containing attitude exclusiveness among national deputies or between groups thereof and declare that should such formula be adopted they would have to reconsider question of their support and aid to Laos.

(9) They consider highly desirable that the next govt confirm the declarations made Jan 10, 1960, by PriMin re position of Laos in external sphere, its fidelity to UN principles of peace and its attachment to its friends. They consider that only govt founded on full national union in Assembly can give these renewed declarations sufficient strength and full significance.

End Verbatim Text

I would appreciate receiving any preliminary reaction of comment from Dept ASAP.[5] This telegram slugged Top Secret since French and British Ambs requested that no one outside four Chiefs Mission and minimum necessary code and secretarial personnel should know such démarche being suggested.

Smith

[5] See *infra*.

342. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 5, 1960—8:43 p.m.

1983. Embtel 2818, rptd London 405, Paris 461.[2] Following are remarks on reftel which we propose discuss with British and French here and which you might wish also discuss with your colleagues and send us your comments.

1. Clearly CDNI driving to achieve clear majority in Assembly under its aegis but no indication RLP leadership making any real effort this direction. It also appears CDNI can only succeed if at least 10 to 15 non-CDNI, mostly RLP deputies, join this parliamentary group. In this eventuality old RLP would be finished as it would be incapable of providing alternative focus around which majority could be formed.

2. We note that of 53 deputies so far elected, 44 are electoral committee's first choice, 5 second choice, and only 4 were not approved by committee. Thus Assembly represents membership selected by both RLP and CDNI which we and allies have supported.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–460. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by Usher and Parsons, and approved by Anderson. Repeated priority to Paris and London and to USUN.

[2] *Supra*.

3. While it clear elections certain districts fraudulent, it not at all clear how widespread fraud was. In any case it most doubtful that RLG would or even should undertake new elections which would be too expensive and involve serious loss of face. New Assembly will therefore have to be lived with and be considered legal; new government will have to emanate from it. (Assembly might possibly call for new elections in certain districts to counter impression that whole Assembly unrepresentative.)

4. While national union all anti-Communist elements remains most desirable, it not at all clear how it can be brought about. (Deptel 1961)[3] Agree formation new parliamentary group best approach but question whether in fact reconciliation among all RLP–CDNI factions can be effected and produce single cohesive national front. More probably majority within Assembly can only be produced from fusion some RLP factions with CDNI. Question arises whether government representing whole of National Assembly would be more effective than one representing simple majority.

5. Point of your concern, as we understand it, is that CDNI majority will form government which may be provocative by its very composition and which also may adopt provocative policies. (There would presumably be no concern if majority were being organized under older RLP leadership.) Problem therefore is to insure an effective government not dominated by hotheads.

6. We are mindful of King's sensitivity to foreign meddling in internal political affairs of Laos (particularly if démarche is to be relayed and therefore interpreted to him by Khamphan Panya). Consequently we not certain proposed démarche would achieve its objective of bringing about reconciliation various anti-Communist elements. On contrary as now proposed démarche might further embitter relations between two groups.

7. Particularly concerned by tone of démarche which amounts to ultimatum: either national union government or no aid. (We note also brunt would fall on us as our aid is principal and indispensable support of Laos.)

8. FYI. Inescapable suspicion that Falaize, seeing Souvanna's chances of becoming Prime Minister evaporating, may be playing on our natural fears to bring Western influence to bear on situation and seek permit Prince again play major role. End FYI.

9. Department not rejecting recommendation of a démarche to King. We hope send you shortly proposal for modified approach.

Dillon

[3] Document 339.

343. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 6, 1960—8:10 p.m.

1997. Deptel 1983, rptd London 8316, Paris 4671, USUN 889.[2]

1. British, French, and Australian representatives met with Steeves morning May 6 to discuss recommended démarche. We reviewed briefly political situation in Laos and remarked particularly on following points:

a) Démarche predicated on CDNI success in forming majority group in Assembly. Since their success depends on weaning away 10 to 15 mostly RLP deputies, it by no means yet certain such a majority will be achieved.

b) Of 53 deputies elected, 44 are Electoral Committee's first choice from slate agreed upon by RLP and CDNI under principle we encouraged.

c) Extend of fraud in elections not clear and in any case Assembly and government emanating from it will have to be lived with.

2. Nevertheless we agreed démarche might be advisable but commented as follows on text proposed by three Ambassadors in Embtel 2818 (rptd London 405, Paris 461, USUN 891):[3]

a) We consider it most unwise to make the internal political affairs of Laos the direct subject of such a démarche. We would prefer to recast it with emphasis on international aspects.

b) We have grave reservations regarding making any threat of withdrawal of aid since it doubtful we are prepared carry out such a threat and since it would probably be strongly resented by Lao.

c) We believe any such démarche should be couched in positive terms.

d) To be most effective we consider démarche should be presented to King personally and not through intermediary particularly not Khamphan Panya who might distort it.

3. Steeves then read our proposed draft substantially as follows:

Begin Verbatim Text

a) At this important juncture in the history of Laos, my government as a friend of Laos feels a special sense of responsibility and concern for its international prestige and future peace and stability.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–660. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Anderson and Chapman; cleared with SEA, FE, BNA, UNP, IO, WE, and SPA; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to London, Paris, Canberra, and USUN.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Document 341.

b) The recent elections for the new Assembly have taken place under circumstances which have created doubts and concern abroad. Nevertheless, we are convinced that Laos can emerge from these difficulties by following a prudent course based on its own national interest.

c) It appears to us essential that there be brought about the broadest possible reconciliation of patriotic elements. Such a reconciliation should produce a widely representative government including men of international stature—a government formed according to legal and constitutional processes so as to avoid any charge that it had been created under duress or through fraud.

d) We consider it highly desirable that the new government reaffirm the fidelity of Laos to its traditional policy of peace and neutrality.

e) Such a government can open a new era. After so many years of tribulations the Kingdom needs peace which can be brought about externally by reassuring the enemies of Laos of its peaceful intentions and internally by uniting patriotic elements for the tasks of national reconstruction. We consider that the threat posed by the Kingdom's enemies can best be countered by the success of a popular government.

f) As a friend of Laos we would be able to give such a government full support and work effectively with it for a more peaceful and prosperous future.

End Verbatim Text.

4. Ensuing discussion revealed broad agreement among those present. Both Paris and London consider it most desirable have strong government including Souvanna Phouma and Phoui. In answer to direct question, Steeves stated that if government of national union requires Souvanna as Prime Mininster, we would certainly go along with it although with considerable misgivings. Quai keen on implying threat to curtail aid although French representative expressed his personal agreement with our view that such a threat to Asians would be strongly resented and thought that Paris would probably accept our view on this matter. Paris also very clear it would not want to make "frontal attack" on Phoumi. Foreign Office wanted to make special mention of difficulties which would face UK in defending Laos against expected Soviet accusation that elections were violation Geneva Agreement if next Lao government were based solely on CDNI, since FonOff believed such a government would have little popular support. Foreign Office also preferred to include in démarche reference to Geneva Agreements (along lines declaration of Lao Ambassador to UK on Jan 9 at London), rather than to Kou's Jan 10 declaration. Foreign Office finally did not think joint written communication good idea and favored separate oral presentations. Australian Min External Affairs pointed to "diminishing utility of such démarches" and raised question regarding effectiveness of the one proposed, but saw its advantages.

5. All agreed to following points, subject to concurrence their FonOffs:

a) Text démarche should be drawn up on contingency basis and presentation left to Ambassadors' decision. In view time element Ambassadors should be free to proceed as they judge best in the light of developing political situation.

b) If démarche is carried out, it should be oral. All felt [oral] presentation would be more effective and with less chance of being used against us and RLG than written communication which might be leaked.

c) Démarche should be made separately by each Ambassador and texts their remarks should not be identical in order avoid impression of "ganging up."

d) If at all possible démarche should be made directly to King; otherwise its effectiveness would be sharply diminished. However Ambassadors should be free to proceed as they had proposed (your 2818) if situation so required.

e) Démarche would have greater impact if Asian colleagues in conversations with Lao officials should talk along same lines. It agreed to leave matter of informing Asian colleagues also to discretion of Ambassadors.

f) It was agreed UNSYG should be informed in New York of proposed démarche.

6. Subject to your further comments, you are authorized to proceed along above lines and use text para 3 above.[4]

For USUN: Since Zellweger has presumably recommended that UNSYG send personal message to King (Embtel 2833),[5] USUN should seek ascertain what action UNSYG has or is proposing take. USUN should also show him our proposed text (para 3) making clear Ambassador Smith has been given discretionary authority use it as outlined. Mission may use substance para 5.

If SYG indicated he contemplating message to King you authorized to encourage such action if in your judgment SYG's thinking is generally consistent with ours.

Dillon

[4] In telegram 2866 from Vientiane, May 11, Smith reported that he delivered an oral version of paragraph 3 to Khamphan Panya on May 8 and Kou Abhay on May 9. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1160; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] In telegram 2833, May 5, Smith reported on a conversation on the morning of May 5 with Zellweger. Zellweger approved of the idea of a démarche and suggested a parallel one to King Savang by Hammarskjöld. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–560; included in the microfiche supplement)

344. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 7, 1960—6 p.m.

2850. Reference: Deptels 1983,[2] 1961;[3] Embtels 2801,[4] 2802,[5] 2812,[4] 2818.[6]

1. As you surmise our joint proposal made principally to prevent formation govt composed solely of hotheads. From statements made by Phoumi in wake his electoral tactics, it seemed quite clear he was driving for straight CDNI/Army govt or to secure narrow majority in Assembly supplemented by as many weaker RPL members as he can persuade defect from Phoui/Souvanna in order form CDNI/Army dominated Cabinet. On basis close local observation I and my French and British colleagues strongly feel either these govts would be most dangerous externally and internally and would be unlikely provide free and frank cooperation with us to extent essential to U.S., Lao and free world interests. We therefore believe it most important in this eventuality that we be authorized to insist so far as Dept and FonOffs deem practicable with Phoumi and King himself that new govt must be based on reasonably proportional representation various conservative elements, pointing up (a) that broadly-based govt would give immeasurably better impression abroad and would provide wisdom and maturity in which "young" so conspicuously lacking; and (b) formation govt restricted to one conservative element and adoption by it [of] any unnecessarily provocative policies may well prevent positive SEATO protection as indicated last January.

2. Maneuvers last three days show that situation still too confused to assess actual strength various elements. I can however see ahead such difficulties in terms either effective coalition govt or effective single majority govt that will so directly and inescapably involve our interests that I am now inclined agree with Department it would probably be better not use threat withdraw aid at this time as originally suggested by my two colleagues but to withhold this weapon until more definite situation obviously vital to U.S. position arises as I have no doubt it will in near future. When it does, Army/CDNI will

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–760. Top Secret; Priority. Repeated to Paris and London. Received at 11:56 a.m.

[2] Document 342.

[3] Document 339.

[4] See footnote 4, Document 341.

[5] In telegram 2802, May 3, the Embassy summarized two communiqués issued by the CDNI; the first congratulated the Lao Government on holding free elections and the second announced the transformation of the CDNI into a full-fledged political party. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.2/5–360)

[6] Document 341.

have to learn, as they have not yet learned, that they cannot act rashly without regard to U.S. and other friendly advice and at same time continue receive support they consider is our obvious duty and in our ofttimes interest to provide.

FYI. While I concurred fully, it was Addis who had been urging some such action all along and Falaize who took principal initiative in suggesting and drafting joint proposal. I therefore believe that even though we do not decide to go along with their suggestion of a joint warning re aid withdrawal at this time for this purpose, fact I was willing to join them in proposing a strong joint stand for deliberation by Dept and respective FonOffs may help considerably when and if time comes that we may wish have them join us in similar démarche on our initiative. In any event believe my position with them will have gone far to dispel any idea USG actually supporting Phoumi while pretending be neutral and favoring Govt of National Union and reasonable proportional representation. End FYI.

3. My thought and that of British Amb at least was that if RPL does have majority we could hope for real coalition and moderate policies on their part of type we had insisted they adopt throughout period Phoui's leadership. On other hand if CDNI obtains majority we cannot expect such a truly proportional govt nor any real attention to advice of moderate and more experienced elements. However, if as seems possible Phoui becomes President of Assembly, might be that he could exercise some moderating influence from that position. Nevertheless my opinion that if Souvanna is to be PriMin in CDNI govt without Phoui representation bridge between two extremes will be too fragile and no such govt could hold together for long. It might hold together long enough however to serve Phoumi's purpose of getting over period of reaction to fraudulent elections without arousing too much internal or external opposition. If Souvanna group splits off from other RPL for this purpose it might provide cushion for entry of a Phoumi govt in six months time without so much external and internal opposition. While on basis local experience for past two years, I still feel Phoui is only man of stature and experience likely provide moderate, truly cooperative middle of road leadership required to carry through our programs here most successfully, I feel King's opposition and Phoumi's Army back-up may in practice relegate Phoui to role Presidency of Assembly or even send him out of country. Nevertheless without Phoui as PriMin I believe our talks will become rapidly more and more difficult and that we must expect particular trouble in holding ground we have gained through monetary and fiscal reforms.

4. When as directed by ref Deptel 1983 I consulted today with British and French Ambs they informed me of preliminary reactions Paris and London which appear somewhat more positive than that of Dept. Addis' and Falaize's reactions to sanitized version Deptel 1983 summarized below:

(a) Addis convinced formation new govt can and needs be beneficially influenced by us despite fact Assembly has "to be lived with and be considered legal". He agreed probably impossible obtain cohesive National Union since leftist opposition eliminated from Assembly. However his opinion that majority within Assembly can just as well be produced from fusion some CDNI elements with RPL as by reverse procedure. He did not feel (ref para 5) that immediate emphasis should be placed on "effective govt" but rather on nature govt's composition.

(b) British Amb feels some form of démarche to King better than none and does not think such friendly advice would embitter RPL/CDNI relations further. While FonOff at moment apparently favors idea of "threat", he admitted UK approach might be toned down in light Dept opposition. Remarked however that UK statement re elections he delivered to RLG leaders April 30 already contained implicit threat by mention possible serious consequences and difficulty in continuing support. He also thought it probable his authorized approach would differ somewhat from ours and might be stronger.

(c) Falaize commented Dept had apparently transferred confidence from RPL to CDNI and deemed Phoumi formula quite acceptable if just superficially vested with legality, but he wondered why Dept felt simple majority formula would be more effective than broadly based Govt of National Union. Pointed out that in times serious danger such as that now confronting Laos democracies almost invariably resort to coalition type govt. He does not feel King's "sensitivity" should be determining factor re démarche if three govts agree that such move warranted by gravity of situation. He also recommended that while withdrawal U.S. aid would be strongest and most effective single element in proposed action since we provide bulk financial support, threat withdrawal French, British and SYG support would also be acutely felt.

Both Addis and Falaize underscored that (1) we had not proposed new elections be held throughout country and (2) Dept appeared confuse parliamentary situation with formation of govt, i.e., that although we agree National Union of all Deputies in Assembly probably not feasible this no reason abandon effort secure broadly based coalition govt representing various political groups.

French Amb then informed me French Emb London had notified Quai of UK FonOff view expressed before our joint proposal that Phoumi would not be so sure of himself unless convinced that if situation worsened in Laos SEATO would intervene. UK FonOff had concluded that Phoumi must be made realize that SEATO apt move

reluctantly if at all should deterioration be caused by provocative CDNI/Army policies and or by very composition of narrowly-based extreme right cabinet.

French Amb finally informed me he saw Souvanna yesterday and that in light CDNI's endeavor obtain polit monopoly, Prince has decided rapidly form new party by night May 8 around himself with assistance Pheng Phongsavan and Tiao Souk. Falaize considered that this initiative could be useful in aligning consolidated opposition to CDNI/Army and would serve as additional argument in favor balanced participation all elements in next govt.

5. FYI. From today's talk with Falaize Dept may be justified in feeling GOF going all out in effort maneuver Souvanna into Premiership. Falaize for first time expressed to me opinion that RPL no longer provides possible center of attraction to rally moderates and was almost openly pro-Souvanna at expense Phoui and other moderates. French Amb seems accept Souvanna's estimated strength of as many as 18 to 20 Deputies whereas "Phoui would not have more than 6 to 8". Our own info from RPL sources indicates RPL seems certain of at least 18 and may even secure majority 32 to 35 in Assembly. I am inclined consider this overoptimistic but it may still turn out that CDNI/Army does not have majority sufficient to form govt and that proportional representation in some form will thus be enforced on CDNI/Army despite their drive for exclusive control.

6. Finally Zellweger called on me and my two colleagues this morning to show us text message he directed by SYG to present personally to King with copy to RLG FonMin (translation of which follows septel).[8] He indicated he would wait to know nature any démarche we may make before seeking audience but feels he must attempt present message no later than May 9. Zellweger informed me that after receiving text he had wired for authorization include specific mention of possible discontinuation UN aid in case our representations finally do include similar reference to U.S., French and British support and aid. I told him I thought it unlikely this would be done in our case at any rate from nature Dept's preliminary comments and my present reassessment of need, but hoped be able inform him more definitely upon receipt my instructions.

7. Colleagues and I still hope for definitive instructions by Monday.[9]

Smith

[8] In telegram 2851 from Vientiane. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–760)

[9] May 9. Because of the 12-hour time difference between Washington and Vientiane, apparently Smith had not yet received telegram 1997, *supra*.

345. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 8, 1960—2:56 p.m.

2005. 1. In order seek reduce tensions and avoid possible misunderstandings you might consider quiet US approach to Generals Phoumi and Ouane (together or separately) in manner you deem most effective and along following lines:

a) Army's preponderant role in elections has aroused considerable concern among friend of Laos abroad.

b) It is feared that Army may seek to dominate next government, that NLHX and enemies of Laos finding all overt outlets for their activities closed may intensify armed insurgency, and that situation may evolve to point that it would be difficult obtain the full international backing Laos needs.

c) It therefore appears most important that next government should not give appearance of Army domination, i.e. include too many generals or one as PM or Vice PM. New government should be broadly representative with inclusion figures well-known abroad.

d) Approach made to generals since US continues have high regard for both and would hope they would use their great influence to work for reconciliation of anti-Communist elements.

e) We remain deeply concerned by security situation. We hope generals could take initiative in Army to insure that training program be given maximum support and security threat tackled systematically and effectively.[2]

2. You may in your discretion inform British, French and Australians of foregoing approach making clear, however, that 1) we did not discuss proposed démarche to King with generals and 2) we believe this approach to be consonant with purpose of démarche and useful reminder of primary security function of Army.

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–860. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by Anderson, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] According to telegram 2863 from Vientiane, May 10, Smith passed these points to Generals Ouan and Phoumi, neither of whom would rule out the possibility that Phoumi might become Prime Minister or Vice Premier in a CDNI-dominated government. (*Ibid.*, 751J.02/5–1060; included in the microfiche supplement)

346. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 11, 1960—1:13 a.m.

2020. Your 2862[2] and 2863.[3]

1. In light reftels and information received via other channels and since we understand from French you have already made representations to Khamphan Panya along lines Deptel 1997,[4] believe you should seek make démarche to King in person as it appears most effective step exert influence at present juncture.

2. Your presentation to King should marry substance subparas a) through c) Deptel 2005[5] and draft démarche Deptel 1997. You should emphasize that actions of Laos affect not only her own security but also inescapably those on whose support Laos relies.

3. You or other Embassy officer might return to Phoumi to impress again upon him what he seems to recognize, viz. how potentially dangerous in present circumstances would be his becoming Prime Minister or even Vice Prime Minister, whether as civilian or officer since he stands for Army rule and all it connotes to allies and enemies of Laos. Even though he has objections to other personalities, surely one can be found around whom an effective government can be formed. It appears to us that Phoumi as MinDef of well balanced cabinet would have ample scope play vital role in period ahead.

4. We have told British and French of your conversation with Phoumi and Ouan and indicated to them course of action we are proposing. If your colleagues have sufficient authority, we hope they will take parallel action. Presence of Selkirk may be helpful.

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1060. Secret; Niact. Repeated priority to London and Paris.

[2] In telegram 2862, May 10, the Embassy suggested that Kou Abhay, Khamphan Panya, and King Savang (indirectly) should be informed of the approach to Generals Ouan and Phoumi since they would probably learn of it anyway. Informing the three would reinforce the message that the United States did not favor Army domination of the next Lao Cabinet. (*Ibid.*, included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[4] Document 343.

[5] *Supra*.

347. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 14, 1960—9 a.m.

2895. Ref: Deptels 1997,[2] 2005,[3] 2020;[4] Embtels 2863,[5] 2865,[6] 2866,[7] 2868,[8] 2891.[9] Following summarizes principal points my audience with King May 12 five to seven p.m. (full details by pouch):

1. After hearing text Dept's message (Embtel 2891), King expressed at length polite appreciation for fact U.S., "great reliable friend who had provided effective moral and material support all kinds to Laos," should take such constant interest in Lao national affairs. He wished however point out that "Crown's deep desire was for U.S. to treat Lao as adults, capable of judging international and national events in full responsible manner and possessing due awareness of gravity their particular situation." Throne's role to date, he said, had been to restore democratic spirit "which had been so hard pressed by events and by vested interests of those previously in power." He had not yet started consultations with deputies next govt though hoped one would be formed rapidly in order preclude possibility lengthy crisis. In particular, Throne anxious have govt in being at time summit conference[10] "since no one knew what outcome of latter would be." "We can nevertheless assure U.S. that regardless of its direct interference in national internal affairs of Laos there would be no military govt here." (Assurance "there would be no military govt" repeated subsequently by King at least four times.)

2. In face King's obvious emotional reaction to receipt message (as on Jan 4, his mouth trembled as he spoke), I carefully and calmly emphasized that U.S. approach not intended as interference in Lao internal affairs but solely represented comments and counsel from one

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1460. Secret; Limited Distribution. Repeated to London, Paris, USUN, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 343.

[3] Document 345.

[4] *Supra.*

[5] See footnote 2, Document 345.

[6] In telegram 2865, May 11, Smith reported that he and his British, French, and Australian colleagues judged that the situation in Vientiane required immediate presentation of an oral démarche based on telegram 1997. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1160)

[7] See footnote 4, Document 343.

[8] In telegram 2868, May 11, Smith informed the Department of State of his forthcoming audience with King Savang. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1160)

[9] Telegram 2891, May 13, contained the text of the démarche that Smith read to Savang on May 12. (*Ibid.*, 751J.02/5–1360

[10] Reference is to the forthcoming Paris summit between Eisenhower and Khrushchev, May 16–17.

of Laos' best friends whose own security inescapably affected, along with that of others upon whom Laos depends, by actions taken by Laos. Our remarks were based essentially on our concern from standpoint possible external reactions. In face current extraordinarily complex problems bound to be perplexing to any govt, USG had believed Crown might wish have benefit its carefully considered views which might prove helpful to Laos in reaching its own decisions at this critical time, suggestions were meant solely as timely and friendly counsel to Lao who faced responsibility for decisions.

3. King replied that knowing basic U.S. attitude always considered intervention by U.S. as friendly; "otherwise would be impossible explain démarches." He then stated his May 11 speech inaugurating new Assembly (Embtel 2873)[11] had already made clear external policy would remain constant. Furthermore, this policy paralleled that of U.S. Laos had never sought wage war against anyone. Its neutrality had just been reaffirmed and would be again in stronger terms. "Main preoccupation of Laos was self-preservation and this why Crown totally opposed to Communism. All the rest of little concern to Throne. No matter what U.S. desires might be, Laos would continue pursue anti-Communist struggle; "any other policy would be rank suicide." I made it clear that last thing USG desired was for Laos to alter its anti-Communist stand but that continued moderation in pursuing this policy seemed likely prove more successful and certainly less dangerous if not disastrous than more violent measures likely be adopted by less moderate govt rather openly forecast in recent public announcements by Army leaders to which we had perhaps given too much credence.

4. Re formation next govt, this was matter for Parliament's decision and one in which Crown could not be involved without giving appearance having personal interest at stake. King obliged stand aside whenever issues revolving on personalities arose, especially in view his own deep traditional attachment to democratic processes. He could only ensure that general tendencies or character of govt were suited to nation, i.e., would not tolerate military govt. Thus would not accept any recommendations as to individuals we believed should or should not be in next govt. Moreover, he remarked with obvious satisfaction, Parliament now entirely different body: "members new Assembly twice as capable as those of third legislature. Admittedly had less political experience but intellectually far superior." Inasmuch as no crisis yet at hand with provisional govt still in charge, Crown would wait one or two weeks in order allow full parliamentary play among members or groups, giving ample scope to exchange viewpoints and development positions.

[11] Dated May 11. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.02/5–1160)

5. I immediately, politely but firmly stressed fact USG not in any sense endeavoring recommend or suggest that particular individual or individuals be included in Cabinet, merely that it not give appearance being dominated by military and include men of international stature and that only more specific suggestion made, had simply indicated belief presence too many Generals or one as PriMin or Vice Premier might provoke reaction abroad undesirable from standpoint Lao national interest or that of friends, referring to my conversations with Generals Ouan and Phoumi under Dept's directives May 10. King at once indicated he had been told of my approach to them immediately thereafter, adding that while next govt would not be dominated by military, civil govt would be obliged maintain tight liaison with Army since latter always better informed of situation and developments in countryside and in much closer touch with people.

6. Savang then gave me extremely optimistic picture of current security situation which he claimed better than at any time since independence thanks to Army's efforts past six months as assisted by US funds and advice. He himself in direct contact with population as well as through Army. This connection Monarch made clear he could not countenance return to former types of govt (presumably Savang meant one headed by or including either Souvanna or Phoui) "for this would mean retrogression of security situation to that obtaining six months ago when entire population on verge accepting Communism whereas with "new look" six months from now it would be possible again travel safely anywhere even to most inaccessible areas. New national spirit had emerged in past three months in hearts of people as result their turning toward Crown to save them in December crisis and internal anti-Commie program must be completed to fulfill population's desires. "This program could in no way be interpreted by VM as provocative".

7. King again defined his own personal position: (A) his political and religious convictions and love of democracy made him avoid seeking play major role in nation's affairs; (b) his family for generations had defended Lao soil as soldiers and fulfilled responsibilities as statesmen and he was following their example. Laos now on right road to recovery: population including Montagnards encouraged by feeling of increasing security and demonstrating attachment to Crown; commercial investments on upswing; whole atmosphere throughout country changed. For these reasons there would be no change in established anti-Commie policy and "prisoners would not be released" (presumably Souphannouvong, et al.). Remarked however that population not interested in National Assembly nor in govt but only in improving conditions of life. Thus up to new govt and Assembly to go out and win people's confidence in every Muong.

8. King voiced hope USG would feel reassured and would not worry further over composition new govt. He felt it would be a good team, born of a worthy parliament, one that would constructively stay on path to national reconstruction. While it would not be one dominated by military, Army had deservedly won prestige by its determined efforts and had proven itself mainstay of country. In conclusion he again thanked the USG for its interest in the welfare of Laos and went to considerable lengths in expressing his personal gratitude for all that I had myself done in past two years here, not only in behalf of my own govt but for his Kingdom. He said that he might find personal satisfaction in knowing that in his contacts with me I had always proven myself frank and loyal and that he was fully aware of what I had done in behalf Laos and that I would realize he considered that I had personally played a large part in the success achieved by Laos during past two years. Smiling, he ended the audience by wryly commenting that from his 30 years of experience under many training circumstances he had discovered the value of patience coupled with tenacity. He felt these virtues continued to be called for in the present situation.

Comment: Except for anticipated initial slight display Royal irritation, audience held in extremely friendly atmosphere with numerous references by King to friendship our two countries and to Lao gratitude for our continuing aid. Nevertheless, quite apparent King, while saying military should stay out of govt and attend own security task, is deeply dependent upon Army and determined see none of old reliables in next govt, preferring new formula probably already privately worked out in advance with Phoumi and Somsanith. Nevertheless I believe this formula may now be considerably modified, in terms of military participation at least, as result US démarche which gave inescapable specific significance to somewhat more general terms used by UK, UNSYG, French and Australians in their concurrent démarches. [12]

Smith

[12] Detailed accounts of these concurrent démarches are in despatch 476 from Vientiane, June 7. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/6–760)

348. Editorial Note

During the early morning of May 24 in the midst of a tropical rainstorm, Souphanouvong and seven other Neo Lao Hat Xat leaders escaped from Phone Kheng police camp outside Vientiane where they had been held since July 1959 pending their much-delayed trials for treason. According to reports, the escape was engineered by a commando operation from the outside but with the apparent complicity of nine prison guards who disappeared with the Neo Lao Hat Xat leaders. (Telegram 3000 from Vientiane and CX–79, DTG 241200Z, from USARMA Vientiane, both May 24; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/5–2460; both included in the microfiche supplement)

At the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting, May 24, Deputy Assistant Secretary Steeves briefed the participants on the escape as follows:

"Mr. Steeves referred to reports from Vientiane on the escape last night of several leading NLHX prisoners. He added that their escape could have a very definite effect on the current leadership issue in Laos, perhaps presaging a prominent role for Colonel Phoumi in the government. Ambassador Johnson later commented that he viewed the news of the NLHX escape as very disturbing." (Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

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349. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, May 26, 1960—7:41 p.m.

2109. Embtel 3008.[2] If Phoumi should consult you re designation next Prime Minister you may review Department's position along following lines:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/5–2660. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Chapman; cleared by Anderson, Cleveland, and Steeves; and approved by Parsons. Repeated to London, Paris, USUN, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 3008, May 24, Smith reported that he had called on Khamphan Panya and Phoumi as instructed in telegram 2086 to Vientiane, May 21, to inform them that U.S. concern over the next Lao Government was based on U.S. desire to maintain Laos' international prestige, peace, and stability. While the United States was not threatening to reduce or terminate aid if it did not approve of the composition of the next Lao Government, changes in policies and attitudes, such as a return to discredited fiscal procedures, would require "readjustment" in U.S. aid. (*Ibid.*, 751J.02/5–1860 and 751J.02/5–2460; both included in the microfiche supplement)

1. We have carefully avoided supporting any leader for Prime Ministership, considering this matter best decided by Lao themselves. We certainly have nothing against Phoumi personally as he himself knows.

2. However US would be remiss in role of friend if it did not express its views with situation as it sees it. Thus we have frankly discussed these views with King and Lao leaders including Phoumi.

3. First we consider security situation far from satisfactory.[3] Skirmishes, acts of terrorism, propaganda activities continue to be reported from all parts of country. There is no evidence that Communist capabilities have been seriously reduced. At same time while FAL's capabilities have greatly improved over past year, we continue receive disturbing reports that its actions in certain areas have been deeply resented by villagers. We continue believe that security cannot be maintained by military means alone and in any case could not be assured if population alienated. Six-man teams are not sufficient answer to this problem; FAL as a whole must develop sense of responsibility.

4. Secondly as Phoumi knows we encouraged and supported single slate of government candidates. We considered that such a slate could win an overwhelming majority in wholly free and fair elections which would have considerably strengthened prestige of Laos internationally. Unfortunately circumstances under which elections held have caused doubts abroad.

5. In light security and international considerations we became concerned that if next government appeared led or dominated by military, Communists might intensify their armed insurgency thus inhibiting economic and social progress on which peace and stability of Laos finally rests. This concern is all more acute since NLHX and fellow travelers have been eliminated from Assembly and thus prevented from carrying out overt legal activities as safety valve. This view is strengthened by escape of NLHX leaders.

6. We concluded that interests of Laos best served by reconciliation of patriotic elements and formation predominantly civilian government composed of representatives all these elements. Besides presenting united front to world, a government so formed could be most effective in obtaining services of able men from among older leaders whose experience should not be lost to nation. This view generally held by all friends of Laos. Besides ourselves, UK, France, Australia and UNSYG himself have expressed concern re situation. This advice is well intended and should not be taken lightly as rumors

[3] This view is confirmed in telegram 2874 from Vientiane, May 12, in which Smith summarized security estimates prepared for him by the [*less than 1 line of text not declassified*] Army Attaché. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/5–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

reaching us have indicated certain Lao were saying it should be. But final decision remains naturally with Lao. We can only hope that they will have considered all factors before taking decision. FYI. Above is summary Department views which you and staff may use as appropriate. You should bear in mind however that if despite all counsel to contrary King designates Phoumi Prime Minister and latter accepts, we may have no choice but to support new government as long as its policies and actions are consistent with our objectives. End FYI.

Concur your suggestion that our advice should be proffered on basis "since you have asked for it".

In order preclude Phoumi and cohorts retaining any documentary evidence of "interference" believe above exercise if carried out should be on oral basis only and no aide-mémoire left with him.

Herter

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350. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, May 29, 1960—11 p.m.

3093. Reference: Deptel 2109;[2] other channel message to Smith from Parsons, May 28.[3] On basis ref Deptel and message from Parsons I saw Phoumi this afternoon by appointment:

1. MinDef informed me first that "King plans abide by parliamentary principle of entrusting formation new PDSP Parliamentary major leader only obstacle to which appeared to be attitude of friendly nations." Phoumi claimed everyone wished him assume Premiership but he "would cede place to someone else of his own choice if US objections to him as PriMin were unsurmountable." Otherwise he would try himself "to save country from unfortunate situation which has existed in Kingdom for past ten years." Phoumi said his party (PDSP) has 35 Deputies plus support of 10 unaffiliated and of "four of seventeen RPL who also members PDSP". (Figures given by MinDef do not of course gibe with 59 total Assembly membership and so far as we know PDSP has only 26, not a majority, and RPL has 19 plus as many as 9 sympathizers from among 14 unaffiliated Deputies.)

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/5–2960. Secret; Priority; Limited Distribution. Repeated to London, Paris, USUN, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Not found.

2. I then passed Dept's advice as contained ref Deptel adding paras 2 and 3 of other channel message.[4]

3. After thanking me for our counsel and past suggestions, Phoumi stated he did not feel he and PDSP had gone beyond Dept's desires. He considered himself one of key leaders in seeking unified front in pre-electoral period, blaming on Nouphat and Ngon Electoral Committee's failure achieve conservative unity during electoral campaign. He added that govt must now be formed rapidly but at same time if he were PriMin he would being about national unity through establishment coalition Cabinet composed of representatives three Assembly groups "provided RPL not too demanding". Actually, he said, PDSP could form govt without RPL but was nevertheless willing have certain of its members join Cabinet.

4. Re next govt's policy, Phoumi stated there would be no change in political, economic or financial spheres from that followed by previous govts and would confirm to US wishes. He could therefore see no objection to his being PriMin in a govt of primarily civilian character. While admitting security situation "not perfect", MinDef asserted state of calm now exists which can only be maintained if new RLG follows proper policy and promised he would take all necessary steps to ensure internal and external security as well as observe recommendations from friendly countries. He repeated that he could however yield Premiership to another but still could not understand our reservations since his party's program was flexible, made no reference to military activities and placed emphasis on winning over loyalty of population. Role of FAL would be to protect civil program and civil authorities.

5. According Phoumi there are two possible formulas: (A) govt headed by himself and (B) govt headed by Tiao Somsanith. In either case there would be no Vice Premier and total number participants limited to twelve. Composition of Cabinet regardless of who takes Premiership will be identical: Phoumi as MinDef, Tiao Somsanith Min Interior, Khamphan Panya Min FonAff, Thao Leuam Min Finance, Keo Viphakone Min Econ and Rural Affairs. Distribution remainder portfolios undetermined but Cabinet would include three unaffiliated Deputies (Nhouy Abhay, Dr. Khamsouk, Leuam Insisiengmay), two RPL (Ngon Sananikone and Oun Heuan Norasing), and two of following four PDSP reps: Oukeo Souvannavong, Inpeng Suryadhay, Bouvan Norasing and Kou Voravong.

6. In concluding conversation I inquired whether Phoumi planned also consult at least with British Amb as I gathered he had indicated he might and possibly also with French Amb taking into consideration

[4] Telegram 3098 from Vientiane, May 30, contains the verbatim text of Smith's oral message to Phoumi, including these two paragraphs. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/5–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

support given by HMG and GOF and deep and friendly interest these two powers in Laos. Phoumi replied he would plan see both of them tomorrow morning once ceremony Provisional Govt's resignation over at 10 a.m.

Immediately thereafter I informed British Amb Addis of substance above meeting with Phoumi and DCM also notified French Amb Falaize.

Smith

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351. Editorial Note

On June 3, the Lao National Assembly approved a Cabinet headed by Tiao Somsanith. Other key members of the government were Phoumi Nosavan as Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs, Khamphan Panya as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Inpeng Suryadhay as Minister of Finance and the Plan, Keo Viprakone as Minister of Economic and Rural Affairs, and Ngon Sananikone as Minister of Justice and Cults. On May 31, Deputy Director for Central Intelligence Robert Amory gave the National Security Council a preview of the new government as part of the usual briefing, "Significant Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Amory's assessment reads as follows:

"Mr. Amory said that after some delay the King of Laos had designated Tiao Somsanith as Premier. Somsanith will probably be accepted by the Laotian Assembly. The King would probably have preferred General Phoumi, but the United States and its allies felt he was unduly antagonistic to Communism and that his appointment might result in stirring up the local hostilities in Laos. However, General Phoumi would probably be the real power in the new government." (Memorandum of discussion at the 446th NSC Meeting, May 31; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

A summary account of Tiao Somsanith's acceptance speech to the National Assembly, in which he promised a "realistic policy" based on international neutrality, restored internal security and rural development, fiscal conservatism and a balanced budget, and a more favorable trade balance, is in telegram 3168 from Vientiane, June 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/6–360) The Embassy made a long preliminary assessment of the new government in telegram 3171 from Vientiane, June 4, in which it noted that Tiao Somsanith would suffer, at least initially, from the stigma of being a "front man" for Phoumi. The Embassy was impressed by Tiao Somsanith's honesty, patriotism,

moderation, and willingness to accept advice and the anti-Communist and pro-U.S. orientation of the Cabinet. Telegram 3171 ended with the following assessment: "We believe it safe expect that proposed Cabinet will be prone seek less our (or any other outside) counsel, will welcome it less when volunteered, and will be less responsive to such guidance after it is received." (*Ibid.*, 751J.13/6–460)

Telegrams 3168 and 3171 are included in the microfiche supplement.

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352. Memorandum of a Conversation, Department of State, Washington, June 30, 1960[1]

SUBJECT

Laos

PARTICIPANTS

The Secretary

Ambassador Herve Alphand, French Embassy
M. Jean-Claude Winckler, Counselor, French Embassy

Assistant Secretary Wilcox
Mr. Robert H. McBride, WE

Ambassador Alphand said, when he came to call on the Secretary on June 30 on disarmament matters, that he also wished to take advantage of his being with the Secretary to raise the question of the training program for the Lao Army. He said it was agreed that U.S. instructors would assist the French until September 1 of this year in order to reinforce the training program. After September 1 the situation should revert to that understood in the Geneva agreements whereby only the French would undertake the training function.[2] He

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/6–360. Secret. Drafted by McBride.

[2] The question of the French-U.S. military training in Laos was discussed by the Director for Asian Affairs of the French Foreign Ministry, Etienne M. Manac'h, and J. Graham Parsons on June 2. Manac'h was in Washington as part of the French delegation to the SEATO Council of Ministers meeting, May 31–June 2. A account of this discussion is in a memorandum of conversation, June 2. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/6–260) Both General Heintges and Admiral Felt were strongly opposed to French resumption of training responsibilities in Laos and the withdrawal of U.S. military trainers. Documentation, included the June 2 memorandum of conversation, is included in the microfiche supplement.

said the French Government greatly feared that there would be a strong reaction from the Soviets if the situation were not restored shortly.

Ambassador Alphand continued saying that he understood that in the past the United States had been worried about the ability and readiness of the French to undertake the entire training responsibility. He said he wished to reassure us now that France was ready to make the full effort and that there would be no slow down of training after September 1. He said that the French would like to have technical discussions with us in order to show us what their precise plans were. He said he thought it was important to have these discussions bilaterally first, as there may be some difference of view. He stressed that the problem in its entirety was a political one and not purely a technical one. He thought that as a first step and before any discussions were held with the Lao the U.S. should send technical experts to Paris who could discuss this entire problem with their French counterparts.

Ambassador Alphand continued saying he knew that we had a Congressional problem with regard to the Lao aid program, but he thought that we could say to Congress that we had helped with the training of the Lao army until such time as the French were ready to take over. He said that the French and ourselves had the same evaluation of the political situation and he also emphasized the very cordial relations existing between the British and the French Ambassadors in Vientiane, and also with the British in Laos.

The Secretary inquired if what the French were asking was that we should withdraw all of our officers engaged in training the army by September 1. Alphand replied in the affirmative, saying that what was wished was that the agreed arrangement should be carried out and that the transfer should take place by September 1. He said he did not believe it was necessary to discuss further details at this time, since these could be developed in bilateral discussion between our experts in Paris.

The Secretary concluded, saying that we would take this matter up for consideration right away.

353. Editorial Note

On June 11, Christian Chapman informed the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs, Daniel Anderson, that the internal situation in Laos and its external affairs had changed considerably since April 2, 1958. Chapman suggested that the guidance contained in NSC 5809, "U.S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia," paragraphs 43–49, was no longer adequate. NSC 5809 is printed as Document 12. Chapman stated that until the fall of 1959, U.S. policy in Laos was a "holding operation" content to maintain Laos' security forces and support the operations of the civil government. After the fall of 1959, there was a general consensus in Washington that a special effort was required to maintain the belief among the Lao elite that pro-West policies were in their country's best interests. Chapman then provided in his memorandum to Anderson suggestions for draft revisions of the relevant paragraphs of NSC 5809. (Department of State, FE/SEA Files: Lot 65 D 169, 300 General—US Government Attitudes and Actions, Jan. 1960; included in the microfiche supplement)

On July 21, the National Security Council discussed the revised NSC paper on mainland Southeast Asia with particular reference to Laos and, to a lesser extent, Cambodia, Burma, and Vietnam; see Document 64. The NSC paper as approved, NSC 6012, July 25, 1960, "U.S. Policy in Mainland Southeast Asia," is printed as Document 65.

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354. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, July 28, 1960—5 p.m.

177. Department pass DOD, ICA, CIA, USIA. Following are summary, conclusions of and forwarding comments concerning "Current Estimate of Internal Security Situation in Laos" dated July 13.[2] Paper prepared by Country Team Internal Security Committee (MILATT, Chairman, Chief PEO, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and CH/PSD USOM) which was requested in late June to make continuing study of internal security situation Laos and to develop basis

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5/7–2860. Secret; Noforn. Also sent to USUN and CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to London, Paris, Canberra, Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Rangoon.

[2] A copy of this study is in despatch 32 from Vientiane, July 27. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5/7–2760)

for reporting on this subject. Country Team concurred July 22. Entire estimate pouched on July 27 as Embdes 32. Having only just arrived,[3] I lack sufficient basis to evaluate or change contents and must therefore withhold comment until I have had opportunity to give paper due consideration.

Summary: During past year both rebels (Pathet Lao) and (Lao Armed Forces) had improved their respective capabilities. Improvement in FAL is relatively greater than in Pathet Lao. Through U.S. supported troop augmentation, receipt of equipment, expanded deployment, and as result of training given by the U.S.-French teams, FAL are now capable maintaining fair degree internal security in most of Kingdom. While FAL are not yet overall combat ready force, they can contain Pathet Lao insurgency except in those areas contiguous to Communist frontiers. Recently FAL have been able to establish reserve which first time has been possible since July–August 1959.

Pathet Lao have gained strength particularly due to desertion last year of about 900 ex-PL troops who deserted with their arms rather than be integrated into FAL. They continue to receive some support in equipment and training from DRV, though it is very doubtful that this support is sufficient adequately to support extensive operation or offset current shortages which exist in rebel forces. Pathet Lao continue to maintain initiative in sizeable areas of Laos and can instigate local guerrilla warfare on extensive basis; and, though barring introduction of sizeable forces from across ChiCom/DRV borders, their capability is not considered sufficient to displace RLG by military action, it is sufficient to cause disruption in vicinity of Communist frontier and those interior areas where population is not supporting RLG.

Conclusions: Based on best evidence now available, it is concluded that:

A. Pathet Lao will continue to maintain capability of initiating guerrilla warfare in sizeable areas of Laos, especially in those areas contiguous to DRV frontier and in certain interior areas where their influence is greatest, but for immediate future they will not have capability to displace RLG by military action.

B. Pathet Lao have capability of increasing their ranks through recruitment of disaffected and/or uncommitted tribal groups unless RLG initiates a prompt and effective program to align these tribal groups in support of Royal Govt.

C. At present time, despite a heightened probability, there is not sufficient evidence to establish that there will be marked intensification of insurgent activity in near future, although PL will continue

[3] Ambassador Winthrop G. Brown was appointed on July 5 and presented his credentials on July 25.

their current efforts to expand their capabilities through propaganda, intimidation, terrorism, and similar tactics, and still [*will*] probably intensify these efforts.

D. It is doubtful that present support furnished by DRV to Pathet Lao forces is sufficient adequately to support extensive operations offset shortages which exist in insurgent forces, but sizeable introduction of forces and/or sizeable support overtly or covertly by ChiCom or DRV, of which they are capable, could quickly change this situation.

E. FAL, as currently constituted to include use of intervention forces, has capability to contain Pathet Lao forces in Laos today and, in fact, to continue to expand area of control, but this cannot be accomplished rapidly or throughout entire Kingdom.

Forwarding comments of committee:

1. Kingdom of Laos continues to be a primary target on Communist timetable for expansion and Communists will continue their efforts to subvert, intimidate and disrupt activities of RLG, using all means at disposal except overt aggression with ultimate aim of obtaining Communist-controlled Laos.

2. While this estimate indicates an improved situation, this condition is considered transient unless RLG/FAL continues to take aggressive action not only to maintain this improvement but to take initiative from Pathet Lao. Further, this improved situation does not imply any absence of hostilities (guerrilla action), as fighting is continuing in number of areas and, while RLG claims control of 80 percent of land mass, this control is marginal in some areas and its maintenance is subject to continuing aggressive operations against rebel elements.

3. Should RLG let up in its efforts to regain territory and to gain support of population or give Pathet Lao a breathing spell, capability of rebels probably would expand rapidly.

Brown

V. THE KONG LE COUP AND U.S. POLICY DEBATE, AUGUST 9–OCTOBER 18, 1960

355. Editorial Note

In the early hours of the morning of August 9, Captain Kong Le, Commander of the Second Paratroop Battalion of the Lao National Army, staged a virtually bloodless coup in Vientiane. At the time, the entire Lao Cabinet was in the Royal capital, Luang Prabang, discussing arrangements with King Savang Vatthana for the State funeral of the late King Sisavang Vong whose body remained embalmed since his death in October 1959. Preliminary reports of the coup are included in the microfiche supplement. At the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting, August 9, 9:15 a.m., Assistant Secretary Parsons described Kong Le as "a good officer, speaks English and is generally pro-American," although Parsons admitted that later reports seemed to indicate that the revolutionary movement that Kong Le headed seemed to be "anti-US." (Notes of the Secretary's Staff Meeting, August 9; Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

In his synopsis of intelligence materials prepared for President Eisenhower, August 9, John S. D. Eisenhower informed the President that while the objective of the coup was unclear, there were indications that the revolutionaries "may seek a more neutralist alignment." On August 10, John Eisenhower provided a further briefing as follows:

"The degree of control exercised by the rebels is unclear. Some members of the government, including Phoumi, are reported to have arrived in NE Thailand requesting asylum.

"The statements issued by the rebels support the constitution and the monarchy; they assure foreigners of desire that they remain; they guarantee safety of foreign property; however, they contain an anti-American undercurrent to the extent that they stand for elimination of our 24-man military mission. Our State Department wishes to assist the legal government to restore its authority. Embassy Bangkok has been instructed to approach the Lao ministers in Thailand and advise them that (1) defeat of rebellion is a Lao matter to be done by them, (2) ministers should return to Laos and rally people, (3) King should issue call for unity, and (4) resolute action is essential." (Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries)

The instruction to the Embassy in Thailand referred to is telegram 131 to Bangkok, August 9. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–960; included in the microfiche supplement)

356. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, August 11, 1960—3 a.m.

221. In response my offer earlier in day discuss Lao situation with him Prime Minister Sarit tonight invited me join him this evening in meeting at Army Conference Hall. General Johnson, CHJUSMAG, and Jantzen also present as well as Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, RLG Defense Minister Phoumi, Luang Wichit Wadakan and top TG military officials.

Discussion opened with Phoumi description events leading up to August 9 coup and assessment present situation. He then outlined plans, already issued as orders, for implementation when supplies, equipment and men all in order, for parachute drop several hundred men retake Vientiane airport followed by ferrying in additional forces by air to oust revolutionary group. According Phoumi all units Lao Armed Forces loyal to RLG except in immediate Vientiane area; states he and General Ouane have had confirmation from each one.

Phoumi plans return early morning August 11 to Pakse briefly then to Savannakhet which will be his headquarters for period until above mentioned operation carried out. He states will remain Laos from now on; will function as commander all military operations Laos with General Ouane in charge. Subordinate HQ for north at Luang Prabang.

Phoumi then outlined assistance he requires from US and Thai Governments to support him up to and through Vientiane operation. These are subject separate message CHJUSMAG to CINCPAC;[2] will cover question air transport (which we hope Thai will supply) and possibly POL to transfer paratroopers Lopburi to Savannakhet and eventually in Vientiane operation (with Lao markings), supplies for RLG forces including food, munitions and POL, and troop pay. Phoumi also requested as first priority, in which Sarit backed him, two radio broadcasting units (Savannakhet and Luang Prabang) to enable RLG to reach population, now reached only by Radio Vientiane, let them know legitimate government continues and rally them to it. CHJUSMAG also cabling on this.

Phoumi noted PEO Laos now unable function and in effect what he is requesting is that US representatives Thailand, and specifically JUSMAG, take over functions in present emergency. This would be accomplished in part by diversion to depot Savannakhet supplies or-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1160. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated niact to Vientiane and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] CHJUSMAG telegram MAA 7715, August 11. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–1060; included in the microfiche supplement)

dinarily destined depot Vientiane. Phoumi mentioned three PEO posts southern Laos, including one available to his HQ at Savannakhet and it was agreed, subject to overall agreement in principle by Washington, that this latter PEO post would provide contact between his HQ and PEO Liaison Office, Bangkok, which situated JUSMAG HQ.

Re publicity, we emphasized to Phoumi need also for world to know that RLG continues in operation and controls country except for small area around Vientiane. Urged that perhaps via Lao Embassy, Bangkok, some declaration of Lao Prime Minister be passed all Lao foreign missions and issued publicly. Also suggested, once existence favorable situation Savannakhet and Luang Prabang neighborhoods established, world press representatives be invited visit. Suggested possible utility statement by King but Phoumi said King "doesn't mix in politics."

All foregoing premised on US position outlined Deptel 132[3] para 2 that RLG continues operate and we continue work with it and armed forces in particular as before, regardless coup. Nevertheless made clear to Phoumi and Thais present that question of principle must first be answered by Washington before any arrangements such as outlined above can proceed. Also emphasized with strong support Thanat that essential keep this meeting secret and that for present any exceptional TG or USG assistance must also remain secret. Emphasized serious dangers providing any pretext for Pathet Lao or DRV intervention. I realize exceptionally delicate is provision by Thais or US of planes for Vientiane operation, but Phoumi emphasized without such help operation not feasible.

Throughout conversation reference always to RLG, made up of 4 Ministers in Luang Prabang, 2 Ministres d'Etat at Xieng Khouang and 3 (including Phoumi and Ministers of Information and Finance) in south. No indication any intention Phoumi's part play it alone or take sole control.

US Mission Bangkok expects have no further contact Phoumi. Department requested address itself to question of principle and, if answered in favor proceeding assist Phoumi and RLG, then address itself to specific requests detailed in communications CHJUSMAG. May also wish consider having Embassy Vientiane or PEO Laos detail special officer or officers maintain contact with RLG government Luang Prabang and/or Savannakhet to handle innumerable problems which will be arising if US means continue work with RLG. Realize this poses immediate problem of Embassy Vientiane's status vis-à-vis revolutionary group.

Unger

[3] Also sent to Vientiane as telegram 141, August 9. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–960; included in the microfiche supplement)

357. Editorial Note

At 4 p.m. on August 11, in an interagency meeting, representatives of the Departments of State and Defense reached five preliminary decisions: 1) the Program Evaluation Office (PEO) would detail two senior officers to Luang Prabang and Savannakhet to act as liaisons with loyal Lao commanders, to provide logistical support, to furnish intelligence, and to carry on PEO's advisory functions as practical; 2) the Department of Defense would establish communications between these PEO officers and the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group in Thailand; 3) logistical planning support for the loyal Armed Forces of Laos, and equipment and material would be used from Thai supplies on a reimbursable basis; 4) Civil Air Transport would expand its air capability at Bangkok and one or two aircraft would be made available for the members of the Lao Government; and 5) the United States would provide a radio transmitter in north Thailand to be used as a clandestine Lao Government broadcasting station. (Telegram 161 to Vientiane, August 12; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/8–1260, and memorandum from the Acting Secretary of Defense, James H. Douglas, to the Chairman of the JCS, August 12; Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170, 091.3 Laos)

These decisions were confirmed at the National Security Council meeting of August 12; see Document 359. They were also discussed at a Department of State–JCS meeting, August 12, 11:30 p.m., at which Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Livingston Merchant emphasized that this military support should be given to the Lao Government, not to General Phoumi Nosavan as an individual. (Department of State, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 70 D 328)

All the documents described are included in the microfiche supplement.

358. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 11, 1960—9:41 p.m.

155. Your 257 and Deptel 151.[2]

1. Believe it timely for you at your discretion set forth to Souvanna our position as stated in guidance for Fromer (Deptel 154).[3]

2. You may add USG has made known publicly its support of RLG as legal government of Laos.

3. If Souvanna asks your opinion of compromise agreement which would bring RLG back to Vientiane, you should express skepticism that any deal so palpably favorable to an armed rebel group in possession of specified key points of Vientiane could possibly provide basis for stable settlement. US view is that there is a legitimate government of Laos and a rebel group which whatever its motivation is no more than a rebel group.

4. If you can elicit Souvanna's views and comments they would of course be of interest to Department. As he has apparently disassociated himself from Revolutionary Committee, we do not know what his position is. While you should of course not imply approval of any views which sacrifice principles which sovereign government should uphold, you may imply that US strongly hopes rebel group will see wisdom of peaceful solution. We too would be distressed to see Lao fighting Lao especially at time when true menace to Laos independence is from Communists outside and inside Laos borders.

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1160. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Parsons, cleared with SEA, and approved by Anderson. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 257, August 11, the Embassy reported on a Falaize–Souvanna Phouma conversation on the possibility of a negotiated settlement between the coup leaders and the Lao Government. (*Ibid.*)

In telegram 151, August 10, the Department asked the Embassy to ascertain Souvana Phouma's views on the rebellion. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–1060) Both are included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] In telegram 154, August 11, the Department authorized the detail of political officer Julian P. Fromer to travel from Vientiane to Luang Prabang to act as the U.S. liaison with members of the Lao Government there. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1060; included in the microfiche supplement)

359. Memorandum of Discussion at the 455th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, August 12, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1–3.

4. Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security

In the intelligence briefing Allen Dulles turned first to Laos. He said the situation was confused with serious portents. He pointed out that on the night of 8–9 August, Captain Kong Le, who was twenty-six years old, staged a coup. The Captain was said to have a good military record, to have fought bravely in the Pathet Lao engagements, and to have been effectively trained in para-military operations. His commander was absent at the time, coming back from a trip to the U.S. Captain Kong Le had one battalion backed by a tank regiment and took over in Vientiane. At the time the government was absent in Luang Prabang with the King, engaged in planning elaborate burial rights for the late King. The Chief of Staff was also up there.

The Defense Minister, Phoumi, Mr. Dulles went on, was unable to get back to Vientiane and went instead to Bangkok. He happens to be the nephew of Sarit.[2] The Prime Minister stayed on in Luang Prabang.

In Bangkok Sarit held a meeting with Phoumi and invited the U.S. Chargé, the head of MAAG, and a CIA representative to attend.[3] At that time Phoumi stated that the Royal Laotian Government would set up two resistance points; one at Luang Prabang where the Prime Minister would be; and a second at Savannakhet, in the southern part of Laos, to which Phoumi himself would go. Phoumi reported that he would need help urgently in the form of aircraft in order to travel and to move the paratroops he would need. Mr. Dulles said that consideration was being given to getting commercial aircraft in the Bangkok area of the C–47 type.

Secretary Herter observed that the aircraft problem was acute because it was the rainy season in Laos and many of the roads were not passable.

Mr. Dulles went on to say that the aircraft could be furnished by CAT (Civilian Air Transport), the crews of which were composed of American and Chinese citizens. Only a few pilots, he said, were available in Laos and those were not very dependable. He explained that there were only two airfields capable of accommodating C–54's and

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Charles A. Haskins on August 16.

[2] Phoumi, by his own admission, was only a cousin-once-removed from Sarit, but by local convention and out of respect he addressed him as "uncle."

[3] See Document 356.

that otherwise light planes, C–46's or C–47's would have to be used. He said that the Chief of Staff, General Ouane, had come down to Vientiane and had been warmly received by the dissidents. He reported rumors that members of the government in Luang Prabang may come back to Vientiane and said it would be dangerous if they returned while Captain Kong Le was still in command. Mr. Dulles also pointed out the possibility that there were sinister elements in back of the coup.

Continuing, Mr. Dulles said that Souvanna Phouma had been in Vientiane and may have been in touch with Captain Kong Le. There was a possibility that Souvanna Phouma might form a government of a neutralist type. The French would tend to look upon this favorably. Mr. Dulles said that anything might happen in Laos and that there were few people of any courage there. He said that one of the U.S. officials at the Bangkok meeting was disappointed with the performance which Phoumi had put up. He said that the immediate problem was a logistical one, if the Laotian Government decides to put up a struggle. He also pointed out that there were two pockets of Pathet Lao forces near Vientiane, consisting of a few hundred men.

Under Secretary Merchant was then called upon for comment. He said that we have made it clear publicly and privately that we give full support to the Royal Laotian Government and that we are encouraging them to restore the situation. One difficulty is that the only radio with any range is in Vientiane and thus the rebels have control of communications. He said that the U.S. was trying to get low-powered radio transmitters into the hands of the Laotian Government. He also pointed out that there was an American colony in Vientiane consisting of about 800 persons including dependents and that there were 500 Filipino technicians who had been brought there under U.S. auspices. He said that the city was quiet so far and that it was in Phase I. Mr. Merchant stated that both the British and the French had professed ignorance and surprise at the coup, adding that both reflected a disturbing complacency. The present government, he pointed out, came into office by popular election and that it was not a case of an old discredited government. He added that the movement of aircraft to Bangkok was already under way but he said that no offer had yet been made to the Royal Laotian Government of the aircraft and that no firm request had been received from that government. He suggested that planes should be used only in support of sensible military operations and he said that there was MSP equipment which could be diverted from Thailand if necessary.

The President said that the U.S. should provide aircraft only if the Laotians can develop a feasible program; in other words, the aircraft should not be wasted.

Mr. Dulles said that the arrangement would consist of a commercial contract between the Laotian Government and the civilian airline CAT.

The President suggested that the way to proceed was to offer the Laotians one or two aircraft and that then we should wait and see if they can get around and make some plans. Then later additional aircraft could be used to move troops.

Mr. Dulles said that the U.S. military mission was in civilian clothes and did not enjoy diplomatic immunity. He said that General Heintges was under restrictions which might be something like house arrest. He reported that there had been no violence so far and that none was likely unless an armed attack were made against Vientiane.

In summarizing the situation in Laos, Mr. Dulles said it would be almost a miracle if we can hold on there and expressed the view that the cards were stacked against us. He pointed to the threat from neighboring North Viet Nam and Communist China and from the Pathet Lao. He concluded by saying the situation was difficult but not hopeless.

[Here follow discussion of matters unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Charles A. Haskins

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360. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 12, 1960—10:35 p.m.

162. Ref Deptel 161.[2] We consider it essential that concrete evidence of US support set forth reftel plus policy guidance contained in Deptel 154[3] and previous messages reach RLG with minimum delay. We are gravely handicapped and presumably RLG is equally handicapped in situation where we have no direct contact with RLG except for what Phoumi from Savannekhet may tell us of its position either directly or through Thai. You should therefore send Fromer to Luang Prabang at earliest opportunity unless you have strong reasons to hold

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1260. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons, cleared with SEA, and approved by Merchant. Repeated niact to Bangkok, priority to Saigon, and to Phnom Penh and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See Document 357.

[3] See footnote 3, Document 358.

him back other than expectation of RLG return to Vientiane. We remain suspicious of information from Souvanna Phouma (your 263)[4] who in our view would certainly welcome legal investiture as Prime Minister.

Bangkok or Vientiane should as feasible also inform General Phoumi of offer our support contained reftel subject to provisos stated therein. We note, however, that apart from Phoumi who may be increasingly isolated politically most available intelligence indicates few Lao would wish to settle crisis by force.

Should Souvanna Phouma come to power we apprehend that even if he did not pursue policy of rebels in all respects he might seek to include Pathet Lao in coalition government and might also establish diplomatic relations with bloc countries and accept bloc aid. You should know that at State–JCS meeting this morning (August 12)[5] opinion was strongly expressed that if neutralist government comes into power, we must undertake fundamental review of our policy and decide anew degree and conditions of our further support. Foregoing adds emphasis to necessity of contacting RLG because we are prepared to strengthen its hand in negotiations and to give logistic support to military moves based on plans acceptable to us if it is confirmed that RLG desires such action. In anticipating pressures from Phoumi for urgent action and general need resolve crisis swiftly it is we repeat essential make earliest possible contact with RLG whether in Luang Prabang or Vientiane.

Herter

[4] In telegram 263, August 12, 3 p.m., the Embassy reported that Souvanna Phouma had received a message from Luang Prabang stating that the Lao cabinet was returning to Vientiane that afternoon. Brown was therefore suspending Fromer's departure and other action pending confirmation of the report. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1250)

[5] See Document 357.

361. Editorial Note

On August 13, a crowd of demonstrators led by 2d Battalion paratroopers marched on the National Assembly in Vientiane demanding removal of the Somsanith government. They were addressed briefly by Souvanna Phouma who then returned to preside over the Assembly. After an extensive session during which the demonstrators outside the Assembly threatened to attack the Assembly building, the

Deputies passed a vote of censure of the Somsanith government. The Assembly sent a delegation of four Deputies to Luang Prabang with the censure motion and a request that the government resign. On the afternoon of August 13, Somsanith sent General Ouan Ratikon to Vientiane to assess the intentions of the coup leaders. Negotiations in Vientiane and Luang Prabang continued during August 14 among the competing elements in the political crisis, but without resolution. Later in the day, the Somsanith Cabinet resigned, and at 6:55 p.m. the King accepted the resignations.

Information on the course of the deliberations is in telegram 282 from Vientiane, August 14, and telegrams 259 and 260 from Bangkok, August 14 and 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1460, 751J.00/8–1460, and 751J.00/8–1560, respectively) The political developments of August 13 and 14 are also part of joint situation reports made by Department of State, Army, [*less than 1 line of text not declassified*], and ICA representatives [*3 document numbers not declassified*]. (Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

All the documents described are included in the microfiche supplement.

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362. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, August 15, 1960—1 a.m.

261. Situation as described by Dixon and Major Johnston (Assistant Naval Attaché) of this Embassy based on their visit today to Luang Prabang and consultations with Fromer and others appears to be reaching crossroads mentioned last para my telegram 242.[2] US may shortly be faced with choice, if RLG Cabinet resignation sticks and accepted by King, of permitting Laos pass into neutralist camp or supporting Phoumi in military effort to gain control country in his

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated niact to Vientiane, Phnom Penh, and Saigon. Received at 5:27 p.m., August 14.

[2] According to telegram 242, August 12, the Chargé in Thailand reported that Phoumi considered the terms offered by the High Revolutionary Command (HRC) to the Royal Lao Government in Luang Prabang to be unacceptable. Chargé Unger asked permission to authorize, if requested, the CAT to transport to Savannakhet Lao Erawan paratroopers still located in Lopuri, north of Bangkok. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

name alone, to set up one-man rule with free world oriented policy. From here I cannot pretend judge possibilities of situation Laos or proper course US action but wish call attention in strongest terms to effect [on] RLG and its future policies of our failing take strong steps to avoid Laos going neutralist.

Symbolic of choice is decision on providing planes to move Erawan unit to Savannakhet. At moment, according Deptel 166 to Vientiane, to Bangkok 169,[3] decision rests with RLG as to whether it wishes have troops moved. Strong impression gained by Dixon and Johnston is that RLG, if one still in fact exists, seems almost incapable making this decision. Perhaps it could if Phoumi present, but he reported unable reach Luang Prabang today and tomorrow, if he tries, may already be too late. TG awaits our word on this and, under what appear to be circumstances of RLG (except for Phoumi) yielding to Kong Le, will expect us now go ahead and move troops as Phoumi originally requested and supply broadcasting unit to him at least at Savannakhet.

Recognize that we have only skimpy idea what kind military action Phoumi planning and what are chances its success. Moreover, TG could already have moved paratroopers by land to Savannakhet if that were central question. Point is they wish, before becoming irrevocably committed themselves, to know our firm intentions and have us committed as well. For this reason I consider it unwise, incidentally, until our fundamental decision made, to press them on setting up transmitter Udorn (Vientiane's sent Department 283, repeated Bangkok 94).[4]

According our information Marshal Sarit sorely distressed recent developments and keenly disappointed failure US come through on tokens of commitment in support of Phoumi. Must recognize he has personal tie with nephew and that has undoubtedly been his ambition to establish special position Thailand in Laos through nephew; these factors will further accentuate his bitterness if US remains aloof.

Fully realize US decision re future course action Laos will be based many factors and support Phoumi in absence RLG may on balance represent unacceptable alternative. Recognize also that Thais are expecting US to bear greater load responsibility and would quite possibly not support Phoumi if decision up to them alone. US must nevertheless recognize that decision by US which leaves Laos to move

[3] In this telegram, August 13, the Department of State informed Unger that he was authorized to make CAT aircraft available to move Lao Erawan paratroopers to Savannakhet if the Royal Lao Government in Luang Prabang agreed. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In this telegram, August 14, the Embassy in Vientiane requested shipment of a radio transmitter to an area north of Udorn in preparation for use by the Royal Lao Government. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/8–1460)

closer to neutralism will encourage tendency in Thailand still not strong, which asks whether such course is not also best for this country.

Unger

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363. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 15, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

State reports that the King has accepted the resignation of the Somsanith government, of which the strong man, Phoumi, is the Defense Minister.[2] He apparently refuses to accept the action. Sarit, in Thailand, has expressed irritation with U.S. inaction on this matter. It should be noted that Sarit is a relative of Phoumi's and probably hoped to gain special favors for Thailand in Laos through this connection. Furthermore, the Thais seem to want to put the bulk of the responsibility on us.

Radio Vientiane, controlled by the rebels, claims that Souvanna Phouma has been designated Premier. This is not confirmed at the moment. Apparently the assembly vote of no confidence for the Somsanith government under duress, being in the hands of Kong Le. The king apparently wishes to avoid a military showdown.

Subsidiary matters include reports that the rebel 2d paratroop battalion had not been paid for two months, that employment of the 1st paratroop battalion would result in the two units joining together in true airborne fashion.

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in telegram 288 from Vientiane, August 15. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560; included in the microfiche supplement)

364. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, August 15, 1960—12:51 p.m.

172. Reference Bangkok's 261 to Dept.[2] From Parsons for Unger.

A. Messages arriving here late Sunday night[3] indicate Phoumi's first reaction on learning RLG resignation is to march on rebels in Vientiane, an operation which (1) cannot be mounted overnight (2) requires US or Thai airlift and other support and (3) would probably internationalize a situation which as yet is localized in Laos with neither free world nor bloc openly intervening. We gather that Sarit and Thai are tempted to draw conclusions on basis whether or not US acts at once to support Phoumi's apparent decision to go it alone.

B. Such attitude on part Thai totally unwarranted and would lead me, at least, to conclude that they need be reminded stop and count ten. US has many times in past acted to counter Communist efforts take over Laos and to deter or defeat Communist direct or indirect aggression in FE. In present Laos situation my own view is that we should not intervene on behalf of Phoumi, who apparently refuses accept his Government's decision and who therefore now may have little status (quite apart from question of loyalty of army to him when present situation becomes known). On other hand, in my view, US is as willing as always to take all feasible steps prevent Laos from falling to Communists. There is no indication this is going to happen overnight or that we can better forestall it by committing ourselves to Phoumi now rather than working with those in Vientiane who emerge from present chaotic situation. No matter who comes out on top we are still in position exert powerful influence unless we or Thai prematurely complicate situation by intervention on behalf individual whose plans and prospects problematical to say least despite his courage and ability.

C. It is impossible tonight to get you firm and detailed instructions but you should seek prevent Thai from taking rash steps in what I believe would be misguided effort pursue our common goal which is preservation Laos independence and integrity. Premature support of an individual who may be isolated politically could prejudice this and our common interest in SEA as whole.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons and cleared with SEA. Repeated niact to Vientiane as 171 and to Saigon, Phnom Penh, and priority to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 362.

[3] August 13.

D. You should have no trouble in letting Thai know we have not remained "aloof." We (1) made contact with RLG in Luang Prabang soonest (2) offered airlift if they would say the word and (3) offered them a broadcast voice in form equipment now at Bangkok. It is in my view unfortunate that RLG decided take different course and resigned but neither Washington nor Bangkok is ideally situated to second guess RLG. Rather we should deal with situation as it now is and that, I repeat, does not mean hasty commitment to act in support of an individual whose plans, even with our help, offer at this stage only dubious prospects of success. We have high regard for Phoumi and his ability and if he does not make misstep now, his position and influence will be preserved for future when it may be needed even more.

E. Greatly appreciate your reporting and action present crisis.

Herter

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365. Memorandum for the File by the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, August 15, 1960.

SUBJECT

Laos—General Phoumi

I telephoned [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to call his attention to the Department's 171,[2] Vientiane's 288[3] and Bangkok's 265.[4] I said that in light of these messages, on which high level approval was being sought and could be presumed, it would in our opinion be most unfortunate if any junior employee [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] were to encourage General Phoumi in any way to act against Vientiane. [*less that 1 line of source text not declassified*] said that he well realized this and his concern was where should Phoumi go. He thought that if he could settle quietly somewhere in Laos rather than be exiled in Thailand it would be preferable. I agreed.

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 62 D 26, Laos 1960. Secret.

[2] Printed as telegram 172 to Bangkok, Document 364.

[3] See footnote 2, Document 363.

[4] Telegram 265, August 15, reported on a conversation between Unger and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman during which Thanat Khoman made it clear that he was aware that the delay in supporting Phoumi's plans for retaking Vientiane was due to indecision in Luang Prabang and the fall of the Tiao Somsanith government rather than U.S. inaction. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560; included in the microfiche supplement)

I added that I hoped Sarit would see the situation as Thanat now apparently does following removal by Leonard Unger of an earlier misunderstanding on Thanat's part.

[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] repeated his assurance that nothing would be done to encourage Phoumi either in the direction of separatism or military action directed against Vientiane.

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366. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 15, 1960—8 p.m.

294. Addressees pass to interested agencies. Ref: Deptel 171.[2] We have received request from Phoumi for 10 million kip to help him retake Vientiane and statement he plans drop tracts over Vientiane today telling of resistance. Based on reftel we have instructed [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] PEO representatives Savannakhet as follows:

"You should advise Phoumi US is not at this stage prepared support him in forcible effort (A) retake Vientiane or (B) prevent establishment new government. He should not drop tracts Vientiane. This based on specific instructions from Washington."[3]

Brown

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560. Secret; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 1:35 p.m.

[2] Printed as telegram 172 to Bangkok, Document 364.

[3] In telegram 176 to Vientiane, August 15, the Department informed the Embassy that this message was approved. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560) In telegram 298 from Vientiane, August 16, 10 a.m., Brown reported that an Embassy official delivered the message to Phoumi at 4 a.m. on August 16, and that "Phoumi nodded politely but said he would proceed with his original plan" to take Vientiane by force. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–1660; included in the microfiche supplement) Phoumi's plan to retake Vientiane is described in a telegram from Felt to JCS, 162113Z August. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

367. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 15, 1960—8:38 p.m.

175. For Ambassador from Parsons. Although with situation still unclear we obviously not in position predict to Souvanna future US courses of action, consider it important you establish relationship of confidence with him if possible. You have probably found him, as I did, gentleman, intelligent, sophisticated, of great charm, sometimes overoptimistic but occasionally tricky and weak. Very aware of being royal prince and feeling he is person who can save Laos and bring peace and unity to country. Believes he can dominate fellow countrymen and situation. Is non-practicing engineer and generally adopts theoretical approach. USG does consider him sincere patriot not Communist or Communist-inclined.

However it well keep in mind Souvanna's oft reiterated theme (perhaps planted by French) while PriMin in 1956–58 that he misunderstood by Americans, that Pathet Lao not Communists but merely misguided nationalists who wished return to fold. Although asserted Lao Government fully aware danger of subversion, he nevertheless proceeded push for PL agreement.

During Souvanna's tenure as PriMin, Soviet representations for accreditation of diplomatic mission in Laos were sidetracked by RLG. However early in 1957 Souvanna, without knowledge of his government, apparently agreed to eventual additional accreditation of Lao Ambassador at Paris to Moscow. RLG recognition USSR and exchange of missions appeared imminent just before Hungarian uprising, but RLG again delayed when furnished details uprising by Embassy.

During courtesy visit Lao Government delegation headed by Souvanna to Peiping in August 1956, ChiComs offered to discuss aid but Lao Government sidestepped issue. In February 1957 Souphanouvong posed as new condition for political settlement acceptance ChiCom aid, but RLG stated ChiCom aid had nothing to do with political settlement.

In November 2, 1956 RLG–PL agreement, never executed, RLG stated it willing establish diplomatic relations with all countries regardless of internal regime and would accept all economic aid granted without strings. Secret clauses provided Communist China would not be recognized until it could prove it effectively controlled all areas which ChiComs considered should be under their administration (pre-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1560. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Erickson, cleared with SEA and Parsons, and approved by Anderson. Repeated to Saigon, Bangkok, London, Paris, and Canberra.

sumably reference to Taiwan); and DRV would not qualify for de jure recognition until Lao–DRV border dispute and Pathet Lao problems settled.

We suspect Souvanna, while more aware dangers Communism than when negotiating with PL in 1956–57, nevertheless believes diplomatic relations with bloc and further negotiations with PL essential for maintenance peace in Laos. At suitable opportunity you might remind him that while PL tactics change their objectives remain same and are contrary to those of Souvanna. From tactics of negotiation in 1957, PL despite November 1957 agreement changed to tactic of armed insurrection in summer 1959 when their objectives could not be achieved within framework of agreement. Thesis set forth to you (your G–48)[2] not accepted here and contrary to fact in that decision PL/VM to use forcing tactics and resume insurgency antedated US training teams and goes back to early spring 59 when pressures gradually built up.

If suitable opportunity presents itself, you should encourage Souvanna to beware of danger of including PL in Cabinet as well as special danger to Lao of establishing diplomatic relations with bloc. The opening of bloc missions would provide new and efficient bases for the direction of Communist subversive activity, to which Laos already dangerously exposed. In view Laos' geographic position it is much better to keep Communists outside national borders if possible. The bloc's devious use of the Polish ICC delegation is a case in point.

Herter

[2] This reference is apparently in error.

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368. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, August 16, 1960—midnight.

274. Reference: (A) Vientiane's 301 to Department repeated Bangkok 111.[2] (B) Report from [*less than 1 line of source text not decalssified*]

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1660. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated niact to Vientiane, to Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 6:57 p.m., August 16.

[2] Telegram 301, August 16, reported that the situation in Vientiane was deteriorating and the Embassy was considering the evacuation of dependents. (*Ibid.*, 751J.1122/8–1660)

representative with Phoumi at Savannakhet.[3] In view reports contained references (A) and (B) concerning Phoumi counter-coup action and Thai government involvement, I asked for urgent appointment Prime Minister Sarit. He left Cabinet meeting with Foreign Minister Thanat and talked with me for more than one hour concerning Laos situation.

I explained that we had had word of Phoumi launching counter-coup operation, including dropping leaflets Vientiane, and that this a matter of such great importance that as representative of close friend and ally I was taking liberty of asking what information he could give me on subject. I knew my government would be studying situation very closely and therefore knew they would also appreciate his assessment situation and any views he wished pass along.

Sarit first reviewed events of past week noting Phoumi's acute disappointment at what was in his view failure receive support from Thai and US Governments. His back is now to the wall and he has decided to go on on his own. Sarit informed me that Phoumi has force moving north on east bank Mekong which has arrived at Paksane.

Prime Minister then spoke at length of his grave worry concerning emerging government Vientiane, to be headed by Souvanna Phouma and according his information including Quinin as Minister Interior and Youth Touby Lifoung, Boun Oum and others. A number on list Thais consider leftists and Quinin as someone who has close association with Pathet Lao. Sarit knew this kind of government in Laos puts communist menace directly on borders Thailand and he gravely concerned for his country's security. In course of discussion I several times made point how US is all prepared give RLG helping hand with paratroopers and broadcasting equipment, but never managed secure clear decision go ahead from RLG. Sarit takes simple view that we had clear request from Minister Defense Phoumi and this should have sufficed but I hope I finally persuaded him that on matters as important as those involved this case US had to be sure it was dealing with whole government and that government as whole was as determined as some of members.

I again expressed interest Prime Minister's views and took occasion review US position as set forth Department's 172 to Bangkok[4] although avoiding any appearance accusing Thai Government. I emphasized our firm intention keep communism from Laos but at same time dangers in Phoumi type of action and also dangers outside intervention or interference. While emphasizing these are my instructions, I noted that USG now undoubtedly studying recent developments which have occurred subsequent to formulation this policy. Prime

[3] Not further identified.
[4] Document 364.

Minister's views would be of value to Washington I knew. Sarit said he admits he would like to encourage and support Phoumi. In fact he feels his position such that he cannot either encourage or stop him since this would be interference with action Phoumi as Lao entitled to take. He then remarked on fact Phoumi was about to start broadcasting and Sarit has asked his people to try to pick up radio. He also made reference to fact that Khamphan Panya has been with Phoumi in Savannakhet and now returned to Luang Prabang to carry Phoumi message to King. Also stated he understands King's acceptance resignation Tiao Somsanith Government under pressure and King unwilling; Sarit assumes King now supporting Phoumi effort.

I thanked Prime Minister for his information and his views and said I would speak frankly in mentioning report which had reached us that Thai Government permitting some Lao forces cross Thai territory to carry out operation against Vientiane. Sarit said no Lao forces were entering or crossing Thai territory. Much as he would wish to, he would not intervene. At this point Foreign Minister asked for further information and he and Prime Minister pointed out no need for Phoumi cross Thai territory since he can move his forces directly up east bank Mekong entirely in Lao territory. I referred rather vaguely to information reaching us, probably from sources in Laos, and noted at time like this all kinds of rumors will be circulating. Thanat explained, as further example, they had heard from Vientiane of Thai paratroopers being captured and he had sent back specific questions which would point up absurdity of this charge.

In course conversation Prime Minister received various reports including one to effect some Phoumi forces at Kilometer 27 (not clear whether this means 27 kilometers outside Vientiane; also could have reference to third paratroop battalion now being formed). Thais understand that Souvanna Phouma expected receive vote of confidence in Assembly tomorrow and then visit King; speculated as to whether Phoumi arrival might head off this event.

Prime Minister asked me what US would do if Phoumi takes over Government. I remarked that diplomats never comment on events which have not yet taken place, but my personal opinion was that the US Government would probably deal with a government which was effectively in control of country.

Prime Minister inquired what was, in my opinion, US policy now and I explained again that much as we regretted capitulation Somsannith Government and its apparent lack of determination, now that it had fallen it was my Government's judgment that military action unwise, and cited contents Vientiane's sent Department 294 repeated Bangkok 104.[5] I said again I could not speculate on what would be

[5] Document 366.

effect, if any, of most recent developments. I expressed regret that dropping of leaflets had not taken place five or six days ago when this action might have contributed to continued resistance RLG. When I departed I noted that I would see Prime Minister tomorrow morning at 0730 with Mr. Landon.[6]

Comment: Throughout discussion Prime Minister was entirely friendly and made point of reading to me from Thai Government telegrams and other materials, and apparently speaking quite frankly. I am nevertheless not fully persuaded that I received true answer to my query about Lao troops crossing Thai territory.

This does indicate to me however that Thais may not mean engage in any intervention or action which they feel likely to be detected and provoke international consequences, even though they probably are giving Phoumi covert support. If Thai something less than frank, probably also because wish avoid giving us any basis for trying obstruct such support. Impression gained from conversation was Thai rather confident Phoumi will succeed in retaking Vientiane fairly promptly. No evidence of their taking possible Pathet Lao action into account.

In view foregoing would appreciate Department guidance at earliest moment it available whether there is any change in my instructions received over recent days. Will continue follow these instructions until advised otherwise. Although no specific request made this conversation, possible that new circumstances will reopen questions put to us before re support from us on paratroopers, etc. In this connection can only recall how consistently over past week Thais have made clear they regard Laos situation in effect as test our willingness countenance drift toward neutralism and, conversely, strength our resolve support real friends.

Unger

[6] Kenneth Landon of the OCB was traveling in Southeast Asia on an orientation tour. He and Unger met with Sarit on the morning of August 17. The discussion centered around Laos and, "with regard to Laos ground covered very much same as my discussion last night" (reported in this telegram). Unger noted that Sarit's comments in the morning meeting with Landon were if anything, "rather more pointed and persistent, reflecting something more like true degree his disappointment and frustration." (Telegram 280 from Bangkok, August 17; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1760)

369. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 16, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

The situation in Laos is still fuzzy. The king has designated Souvanna Phouma, who was Premier in 1956 and 1957, as Prime Minister. Souvanna has said that the new cabinet will contain no military figures.[2] It is expected that he himself will hold the post of Minister of Defense. Apparently Souvanna is wiser than he had been when he held office three years ago, but he still is of the opinion that the way to end Laotian civil war and difficulties is to negotiate with the Pathet Lao. Our Ambassador is going to attempt to make him aware of the dangers of including the Pathet Lao in the government. Apparently, his policy comes from generally widespread sentiments of the population.

The semi-official Lao press, on August 13th, carried a clarification of developments for the foreign community and denied that the rebels had asked Americans to leave Laos, or that Souvanna was back of the coup. However, the victory parade lead by Kong Le carried some banners in Lao, French and English which said "PEO (Project Evaluation Organization) we don't need you."[3] Additionally, the situation remains so confused that anarchy is likely to develop during the period and there is no strong government in control. General Heintge's assistant, named Jack Wood (who may have been General Gruenther's aide) has requested [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] military [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] help.

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] According to the joint situation report of 7 p.m., August 16, Souvanna Phouma designated himself as Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The other important designated portfolios in the Cabinet were: Boun Oum, Secretary of State for National Defense; Touby Lyfoung, Minister of Justice, Religion, and Information; Quinim Pholsena, Minister of Interior; and Khamking Souvanlasy, Minister of Finance and the Economy. The general assessment was that the Cabinet was made up of men of relative inexperience and little international stature. ([*document number not declassified*], August 16; *ibid.*, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Reported in joint situation report of 5 p.m., August 15. ([*document number not declassified*], August 15; Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

The military situation is aggravating things to some extent. Kong Le's troops are becoming weary and more negligent all the time. There is a possibility of Phoumi infiltration into the center of Vientiane. In addition, Phoumi has dropped leaflets on Vientiane indicating he will return. Our diplomats are trying to convince him that while they appreciate his support they oppose any military effort on his part to gain control of or split Laos. If he goes ahead, there is a danger that Pathet Lao rebels may intervene on behalf of Kong Le. (Here the President read Current Intelligence Memorandum OCI No. 4125/60, subject: Indications of Impending Armed Conflict in Laos.[4] This memorandum states that Phoumi has begun his counter-coup yesterday with forces estimated at perhaps five companies. He expects to pick up additional units. It states that the King has instructed Phoumi to drop this effort, but Phoumi has ignored the order. It gives as the two major immediate dangers, (1) that Pathet Lao may join Kong Le; and (2) that Kong Le may retaliate against his hostages in Vientiane.)

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[4] Not found.

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370. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 17, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

You have been brought up to date on the Laos situation in connection with the press conference.[2] Phoumi's people claim that the King is in secret sympathy with them. Meanwhile, Kong Le shows evidence of harboring political ambitions of his own. He has said that

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] For the transcript of the President's news conference of August 17, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960–61*, pp. 633-643. The President was asked one question on Laos.

the Souvanna government is merely provisional (Souvanna has admitted as much)[3] and that he himself would head the only political party permitted. Aside from Souvanna, the government is made up of second-rate officials.

Apparently Phoumi has a force moving north on the east bank of the Mekong River which has arrived at Paksane. Because of the rebellious nature of the political situation and the possibility of Phoumi taking military action, State has asked Ambassador Brown whether he sees a possibility of delay of investiture of the Souvanna government.[4] Souvanna has said that he would negotiate with Phoumi but noted that under current conditions Phoumi would be acting as a rebel.[3] Brown says that military force is on Phoumi's side, but legal right is on Souvanna's side, and he has urged that we use our influence to bring them together to negotiate.[5] The British were on the verge of making an official call on Souvanna as the head of the government but have temporarily held off.[6] Of course, the question of our public support and recognition is still in the air.

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[3] Reported in telegram 310 from Vientiane, August 16. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In telegram 184 to Vientiane, August 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Suggested in telegram 315 from Vientiane, August 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Reported in telegram 189 to Vientiane, August 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.13/8–1760)

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371. Memorandum From the Director of the Office of Southeast Asian Affairs (Anderson) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, August 17, 1960.

US POLICY FOR PRESENT SITUATION IN LAOS

Souvanna Phouma's cabinet is weak. It will not enable Souvanna to exercise real control over the affairs of the country. Without effec-

[1] Source: Department of State, FE Files: Lot 62 D 26, Laos 1960. Secret. Drafted by Usher. On the afternoon of August 17, representatives of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency met with Acting Secretary

Continued

tive FAL support the cabinet will be at the mercy of the PL.[2] The assumption of power by the Souvanna Phouma cabinet may represent the beginning of a Lao slide into Communism.

It is desirable, therefore, that Phoumi retain his present position of strength. From this position of strength he can exert a powerful influence to prevent the control of Laos from slipping out of Souvanna's hands into that of the Communists.

If Phoumi exercises this influence by attacking Vientiane he will quite certainly antagonize thereby many elements of Laos' top leadership. He would also immediately increase the danger of an outbreak of PL armed guerrilla action. Another result would be his strong condemnation by the British and the French, as well as presumably the Indians. These things would complicate the position of SEATO and the UN vis-à-vis possible maneuver to stabilize the Lao situation.

The big question seems to be whether Phoumi can exercise more beneficial long run influence by attacking or by political maneuvering from a position of strength. He has demonstrated capability for this type of maneuver in the past.

The answer to this first question would seem to depend on the answer to a second question, namely will Phoumi's position be weakened irretrievably if he does not attack Vientiane.

Thus far the army, excepting of course the 2nd battalion, seems to have been willing to recognize his leadership, and there are no indications of any other elements having been inclined to desert him in favor of Kong Le. We have, of course, the position of[3] Amkha and Sing to be considered. The evidence available indicates that there is no reason why they would favor throwing in their lots with Kong Le.

Conclusion:

1. Phoumi should not attack Vientiane.

2. We should endeavor to protect Phoumi's position as an influential General in Laos.

Dillon to discuss U.S. policy in Laos. The only report on this meeting found is the following brief extract from the notes of the Secretary's Staff Meeting:

"Mr. Parsons said our position, established in an inter-agency meeting yesterday, will not satisfy those who wish a stronger stand and more immediate support for Phoumi, but it has already proved sound since there have been overnight reports of overtures by Phoumi to Souvanna through the French." (*Ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

Presumably the memorandum printed here was prepared for Parsons' use at the interagency meeting.

[2] At this point the following phrase was crossed out: "and its dupes such as Capt. Kong Le."

[3] At this point "Generals Ouan" was crossed out.

3. We should encourage negotiations between Phoumi and Souvanna Phouma in the course of which Phoumi would be able to establish a firm legal position for himself as an influential force in Lao affairs.

Recommendations:

1. That we initiate an approach to the King to ask him to call for such negotiations.

2. That we take the position with the Lao that we would continue support of the FAL only if we are satisfied that it is properly led toward the achievement of the objectives which have been mutually shared by the US and previous Lao Governments.

3. That we use appropriate means to encourage Phoumi to negotiate rather than attack.

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372. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 17, 1960—9:11 p.m.

188. Your 315.[2]

1. Agree with your analysis but have reservations re your suggestions. Initial impression Souvanna Cabinet is one of serious weakness and inexperience. Quinim is only identified leftist but we note Sisouman[3] was captured by PL and returned after November 1957 Agreements. Prospects are Cabinet's energies and time will be devoted to negotiating settlement with PL thus leaving PL in countryside to continue subversion unopposed. Although "legality" cabinet evidently accepted by most Lao leaders, latest info indicates it remains at mercy of Kong Le whose actions and words strike us as dangerously immature and irrational. Since his political thinking appears conditioned by his association with Bong's sons, who considered leftist,

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1760. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Parsons and Chapman, cleared by Anderson and approved by Dillon. Also sent niact to Bangkok and repeated to Paris, Saigon, Phnom Penh, London, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 315, August 17, Brown recommended that President Eisenhower send King Savang a private message which the King would then show to Phoumi and Souvanna. In the message, Eisenhower would urge compromise. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Tiao Sisouman, prospective Secretary of State for Social Welfare and Rural Affairs.

situation in Vientiane hardly encouraging and appears basically unstable. Thus our first objective is to eliminate Kong Le from position of dominating government and to neutralize his influence.

2. Apart from international complications principal reason for withholding support of attack against Vientiane by Phoumi has been that Lao overwhelmingly appear desire bloodless solution and countercoup accompanied by bloodshed would thus appear unlikely to receive much support. Given this general attitude and with new government now invested constitutionally, it now question whether commanders outside Vientiane would follow Phoumi's leadership in launching attack against capital. Thus it would appear that if Phoumi attempted countercoup and failed, he might be eliminated as force in Laos and Army seriously divided. Maintenance of Army as main bulwark against Communist takeover is a second major US objective.

3. Manifest US support of Phoumi also poses grave international and internal problems. Aside from immediate allies in Thailand and Viet-Nam, it doubtful major allies would follow. We certainly would be open to massive propaganda attack. Furthermore Phoumi's return to power with US support in coup that resulted in bloodshed would seem short-term solution. Counterforces against Phoumi would likely build up and eventually overwhelm him and probably with him US influence in Laos.

4. Given these circumstances, our thinking is that Phoumi and Army outside Vientiane should be held together as counterpoise to situation in Vientiane. Phoumi's position, in which he would probably be supported by field commanders, might be to recognize Souvanna Cabinet once it has shown itself free to act. Cabinet not free as long as Kong Le dominates city. Phoumi would therefore take position that before accepting government's authority 2nd Parachute Battalion and Kong Le would have to return to its barracks outside Vientiane, a new military commander of Vientiane appointed, and given troops to maintain order and security in capital. This position we could support.

5. In view of extremely fluctuating situation and known distaste of King for becoming involved in political arena, we hesitate to involve President's prestige. From past experience we gravely doubt King willing take any meaningful action. It would certainly be helpful however if you had opportunity of discussing situation with him, but hesitate asking you go to Luang Prabang in view uncertainties of weather at this time of year and need of your presence in Vientiane. Nevertheless, it would be undoubtedly helpful if he would bring his position to bear on eliminating Kong Le's influence. It seems here King might be willing do this by expressing his view through General Ouan. This thought might be relayed to him via Khamphan Panya or other more reliable channel.

6. In light [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Phoumi's needs for provisioning army and in order maintain troops in being, we have authorized [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] limited financial support. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] This support has been linked with admonition not to unleash forces believed converging on Vientiane and reminder that any future support would have to be contingent on an agreed position, probably along lines set forth this message.

7. This message not addressed to longer-term question of our position vis-à-vis Souvanna Cabinet. Present thinking is that we should work with it, preserve our assets and countryside against day when action might have to be taken to prevent unacceptable developments. We also contemplate that Prince Souvanna himself would have to be brought to agree that solution along lines para 4 is only one which likely bring him into position of authority over Captain Kong Le, Vientiane, Laos and ANL.

[*Numbered paragraph 8 (6½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

9. For Unger: Please brief Thai judiciously on substance foregoing, after Ambassador Brown has had opportunity to react to this position.

Dillon

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373. Memorandum of Discussion at the 456th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, August 18, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1 and 2.]

3. Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security

[Here follows discussion of subjects unrelated to Laos.]

Turning finally to Laos, Mr. Dulles indicated that the situation was still confused. He said that there were three foci of activity in Laos—Vientiane, Luang Prabang, and Savannakhet. He pointed out that the government of Souvanna Phouma had been installed in Vientiane.[2] There was some difference of view within the U.S. Govern-

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Robert Johnson on August 25.

[2] On the morning of August 17, the provisional Souvanna Phouma government was invested by all of the 38 Deputies present at the National Assembly. (Joint Situation Report, August 17. ([*document number not declassified*]; *ibid.*, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

ment, he indicated, as to how legal the government was. Initially the King had accepted the government but he may now be having second thoughts. The Assembly vote for the new government was unanimous but the Assembly members were under pressure. They had lived for some days in the Assembly chamber and would have done almost anything to go out.

We believed that the French are quite happy with Souvanna Phouma, but we were not nearly so happy. Mr. Dulles noted Souvanna Phouma's earlier dealings with the Pathet Lao and said it was his personal view that this was the first step of a possible Communist take-over of Laos. Souvanna Phouma, he said, was not a strong political leader. He might be used by the Pathet Lao. There were some differences of view within the U.S. Government on this matter, however. Mr. Dulles pointed out that we were in a better position in Washington to know what was going on in Laos than the Laotians were themselves. We were in communication with all three areas but Vientiane could only send messages to the outside and not to Luang Prabang and Savannakhet. Efforts were underway to provide improved communications within Laos.

Turning next to Savannakhet, Mr. Dulles noted that Phoumi was in control. He was in touch with all the military commanders in the provinces except for Vientiane. Phoumi claimed, and he may have, the loyalty of all these commanders. One of the important problems in Laos was the possibility of the breakdown of the military forces of the central government which constituted the most important bulwark to a Communist take-over. Mr. Dulles noted that Phoumi had no money and that he needed money to pay his troops so that they could get food. [2 *lines of source text not declassified*] Speaking finally of Luang Prabang, Mr. Dulles said that we understood that the King was wavering on whether he likes the government that had just been installed in Vientiane.

Mr. Dulles pointed out that Phoumi wished to send troops against Vientiane and that we had strongly urged him not to do so . He could not do much at the moment anyway because his troops were scattered around the country. He had sent some troops down the Mekong River. It was our hope that he would not attack Vientiane; he did not have the necessary forces there. It would be difficult to get them in overland and he had only one C–47. He had had three C–47's but two were out of commission. He had appealed to us for more.

Secretary Gates asked why we hoped that Phoumi would not attack Vientiane. He pointed out that Vientiane was being held by one man (Kong Le) and 800 people. He thought that the sooner we knocked off Kong Le the better. In response Mr. Dulles pointed out that the Lao are not much given to fighting. Mr. Dillon said that it was State's feeling that our first objective should be to get rid of Kong Le.

The more we hear of him, the more he sounds like a very bad actor. He sounds like a Castro Communist-type individual. It was State's feeling that he completely dominated the situation in Vientiane and that the present government, whether legal or not, was controlled by him. We could not rely on it as a government until we got rid of Kong Le. State thought that if we could get rid of Kong Le, it would be possible to make an arrangement between Souvanna Phouma, the King, and Phoumi to establish a government of which Souvanna Phouma and Phoumi would both be members and which would be anti-Pathet Lao and anti-Communist.

Mr. Dillon pointed out that the only way that Phoumi's military forces could get to Vientiane would be if the U.S. took them there. Everyone knew this and if Phoumi got back by a bloody attack made possible by U.S. overt help, the reaction would be highly adverse. The U.S. would be strongly opposed by its allies outside the region; by Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand. The Australians, who had taken a strong line generally on Laos, had strongly advised us against any such action the day before.

It was State's view, Mr. Dillon indicated, that we could get the same results by other means. We should keep Phoumi strong and let him move toward Vientiane with adequate forces. We should have him in touch with Souvanna Phouma and the King on the the basis that he could not deal with Souvanna Phouma until Kong Le was out of Vientiane. It was possible that Kong Le's forces were not behind him and that if faced by overwhelming force, they would cave in.

Secretary Gates stated that he would not argue the matter in the Council, but that Defense disagreed with the State position. The President asked why planes should not be sent over Vientiane every night with pamphlets. Mr. Dulles indicated that this had been done and that we could help do it again. It was important, the President suggested, that disaffection be stimulated in Vientiane. He agreed that it would be undesirable to cause a bloody fight which would be recognizably supported by U.S. help. The President asked whether the Thais should not be encouraged to blockade Laos on the South. Mr. Dulles indicated that they had already done so and that eventually this action would cause Vientiane to be starved out.

Mr. Dillon noted that the day before Phoumi had sent a message to Souvanna Phouma indicating his (Phoumi's) loyalty to the King and asking for talks with Souvanna Phouma away from Kong Le.[3] This action fit in with our own line of getting rid of Kong Le, but not through bloodshed. The Lao had a long tradition of not liking bloodshed. General Lemnitzer inquired how it would be possible to accom-

[3] Reported in telegram 320 from Vientiane, August 17. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

plish this as long as Kong Le was in Vientiane and could prevent it. General Lemnitzer felt that Phoumi should be brought toward Vientiane as rapidly as possible. Phoumi had a good plan for military operations against Vientiane, General Lemnitzer indicated. [2 *lines of source text not declassified*] Secretary Dillon pointed out that Phoumi's plan provided for a drop of 500 paratroopers and that it would be evident, if these paratroopers were dropped, that the aircraft were not Phoumi's. Secretary Gates argued, however, that if we took such action we would be acting in support of a freely elected government. The President pointed out, however, that there was now a new government in Laos. He went on to ask whether the U.S. could not bring Phoumi's forces part of the way toward Vientiane. In response, Secretary Dillon pointed out that there were no airports between Savannakhet and Vientiane. The President then asked whether an air drop would not be possible. Mr. Dulles said that this was the issue; whether further aircraft should be supplied to Phoumi. Secretary Dillon said it would be all right to supply aircraft as long as we continued to control them. General Lemnitzer asked whether immediate help did not need to be given to Phoumi on communications. Mr. Dulles said that Phoumi had good secret communications but he could not get on the air himself to broadcast to the Laotian people. He said that Sarit might provide some help. The President concluded the discussion by saying that help should be provided right away on communications.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral briefing by the Director of Central Intelligence on the subject, with specific reference to recent evidences of friction between the USSR and Communist China; recent developments in the Soviet space and ballistic missiles program; and the situation in Laos.

Robert H. Johnson

374. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Acting Secretary of State [1]

Washington, August 18, 1960.

SUBJECT

Constitutionality of Laos Government

After talking with you, I had a call from Allen Dulles who said that this matter of "government now invested constitutionally" [2] had real importance for him. He lived with a situation before where he was supporting someone against government constitutionally in office, but he did not like to be put in this position if it could be avoided. He was afraid that we might unnecessarily tell other governments and the world that we regarded the Souvanna Phouma goverment as fully invested constitutionally.

After thinking this over, I drafted the attached [3] which seems to me does no harm and might make Mr. Dulles happier. It has been only today that we received evidence that the forms considered necessary for completion of investiture have not been completed. [4] As I understand it, the constitution makes no mention of the need for a royal ordinance before the government can take its oath of office.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1860. Secret; Eyes Only. A marginal note on the source text indicates that Dillon saw this memorandum.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra.*

[3] The paper, "Constitutionality of Laos Government," August 18, was not attached and has not been found.

[4] The Lao Ambassador in Bangkok, Tiao Khamphan, informed Unger that it was his belief that unless Souvanna Phouma went to Luang Prabang to present his government to the King, it would not have legal status. (Telegram 277 from Bangkok, August 17; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

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375. Editorial Note

On August 20, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Hayden Williams, sent Assistant Secretary of State Parsons a letter transmitting the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Laos. These views, as contained in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense of August 19, read as follows:

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff are concerned about the present situation in Laos. If this situation continues or further deteriorates, it is our opinion that the government of Laos will be Communist oriented if not Communist dominated. Since the situation may take a turn for the worse within the next few days, we recommend that General Phoumi be informed immediately that the U.S. will render him necessary support in his efforts to regain control of the Laos Government. It is also recommended that assistance necessary, particularly airlift, be provided General Phoumi as quickly as practicable."

Williams added in his covering letter: "We [ISA] are also uneasy about attempts to arrange a compromise between Souvanna Phouma and General Phoumi, having in mind the former's past history and evidence that he is and may continue to be under the influence of Kong Le and other unfriendly elements." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2060; included in the microfiche supplement)

Admiral Arleigh Burke wrote Secretary of Defense James H. Douglas, Jr., on August 20 that it would be"wrong to try to influence Phoumi to accept a compromise with Souvanna Phouma." Burke described Souvanna as a "weak sister" who was "prone to compromise with the Communists." In Burke's view, Phoumi was a friend of the United States who had demonstrated his anti-Communism and could retake Vientiane with little or no bloodshed. (Memorandum from Burke to Douglas, August 20; Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD Files: FRC 64 A 2093, Laos 091; included in the microfiche supplement)

376. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 19, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

The French Ambassador, Falaize, has suggested that the U.S., British, French and UN Ambassadors go to Luang Prabang today to ask the king whom they should deal with.[2] State has instructed Brown that we do not like such a concerted démarche and believe the king would like to avoid being confronted with decision. Meanwhile, permission has been granted for the evacuation of foreigners from Vientiane and the first group of evacuees is to be ferried into Thailand today.[3]

The French have been urging us to support Souvanna on the basis that Souvanna appears to be nearing an agreement with Phoumi, and if we would support him now, we could influence him better later.[4] Apparently, Souvanna is bitter over King Savang's attitude in withholding royal sanction for his government, thus undercutting its authority. Phoumi, by contrast, seems increasingly confident.

King Savang is reported hopeful that a negotiated settlement can be worked out between Souvanna and General Phoumi as a way toward a bloodless solution which would preserve his neutrality in the situation. Souvanna's first attempt to enter into negotiations with Phoumi has ended in failure, however. Troop movements in preparation for Phoumi's scheme to encircle Vientiane are continuing; an American official in touch with Phoumi at Savannakhet estimates that it will take ten days for Phoumi's planned force of 5000 to reach the capital. Meanwhile, Kong Le, leader of the Vientiane rebels, has told

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in telegram 332 from Vientiane, August 18. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] All dependents of official U.S. personnel and certain third-country nationals for whom the United States was responsible were evacuated to Bangkok on August 19. (Joint Situation Report, [*document number not declassified*], August 19; Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

[4] Reported in telegram 651 from Paris, August 18. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

the British military attaché that if the new Souvanna government did not conform to his ideals, he would have to remove it.[5]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[5] [*Footnote (1½ lines of text) not declassified*]

377. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 22, 1960—5 p.m.

364. Manila for MLG. CINCPAC for POLAD. Addressees pass interested agencies. References: Embtel 355, Deptels 214, 215.[2] My reservations proposals Bangkok's 160,[3] with most of which I fully agree, stem from fact I believe we have reached crucial stage in negotiations between Souvanna and Phoumi and approach to Sarit most effective if made on fully considered basis as part of definite plan.

Our objectives are: (1) prevent civil war, (2) prevent Communist intervention, (3) preserve FAL security and defense capabilities and (4) develop government with sufficiently broad-based support to offer prospect stability of tenure and with minimum leftist tendencies. It is important that this be accomplished soon.

On further reflection, I believe it would be unwise for us attempt determine too precisely form of compromise between the two men. We are far too unsure our facts. At best our judgments are based upon

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2260. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok, Paris, Phnom Penh, Saigon, London, Manila, and CINCPAC. Received at 10:22 a.m.

[2] In telegram 355 from Vientiane, August 20, Brown suggested that a U.S. official or Zellweger facilitate a compromise between Kong Le's and Phoumi's forces under conditions which would physically separate the two sides and reconstitute the Lao Government under Souvanna Phouma. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–2060)

In telegram 214 to Vientiane, August 20, the Department of State approved this suggested compromise, preferring Zellweger to act as the intermediary. (*Ibid.*)

In telegram 215 to Vientiane, August 20, the Department noted that while it approved of a agreement between Souvanna and Phoumi on withdrawal of Kong Le's forces, it did not wish to imply sympathy with Kong Le. (*Ibid.*) All three telegrams are included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] The reference is in error and should be to telegram 180 from Bangkok to Vientiane, sent to the Department of State as 312, August 21, in which Unger stated that he was going to discuss with Sarit five "fundamental objectives" in Laos: removal of Kong Le, integrity of the FAL, support of Phoumi, avoidance of a civil war, and a compromise political settlement resulting in a neutral Laos still friendly to the West. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2160; included in the microfiche supplement)

a distillation of rumor, counter-rumor, [garble] and speculation. In any event, a fact in Laos today is not a fact tomorrow. Moreover, in endeavoring to induce a solution to our taste, we must recognize that it would not endure if it did not correspond to the genuine result of the myriad conflicting political forces in the country.

Therefore we must concentrate our efforts primarily on forcing an agreed solution.

Souvanna personally is certainly in mood for negotiation and might well, if he thought he could get away with it, modify his cabinet, which as we know was not his first choice. He has begun process reducing influence Kong Le. He has appointed a respected soldier as C-in-C. He has told Phoumi Kong Le's appointment as deputy is temporary. He plans send further emissary Savannakhet, probably Amkhe. He has publicly appealed for avoidance bloodshed. How far he is free agent is still, however, not fully certain. MILATT, who saw Ouane today, reports him dejected and unwilling talk freely.

Phoumi, however, gives less indication willingness make concessions. He has not renounced intention retake Vientiane by force. His radio continues challenge legality Souvanna govt and call it pro-Communist. He is rapidly organizing new administration in south. He may be endeavoring hold new session Assembly there and get them vote overthrow Souvanna, thus introducing further element confusion into situation.

I recommend therefore that we present following position to Phoumi and Souvanna (more general than that proposed in Embtel 355) and try get Sarit's support for it. See no objection also making other points in Bangkok's 180 to Sarit. [4]

(1) Current situation in Laos continues in US judgment to be an internal affair.

(2) There must be a negotiated settlement involving an overall political solution for the country.

(3) Solution by force cannot be supported by U.S., West or U.N.

(4) While there may have been some duress in recent events, US nevertheless acknowledges that Somsanith govt in fact resigned and Souvanna has been requested by King to form new govt. We must therefore deal with him as Premier-designate.

(5) Time is of essence to protect country against Communist insurgency or invasion. FAL and police must not be weakened, allowed to deteriorate, or be diverted from their primary internal security mission.

(6) Constitutional processes must be restored throughout Kingdom to include freeing of all individuals and all elements of govt from coercion and intimidation.

(7) Troops must be paid promptly, but in normal fashion, and without political advantage to either side.

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[4] This reference confirms that the previous reference (see footnote 3 above) is indeed to telegram 180 from Bangkok to Vientiane.

(8) While above considerations are not all inclusive, it is hoped solution along above general lines will be reached, thus preserving integrity and well-being of Laos and permitting continuation U.S. assistance.

Following additional points should be made vigorously to Phoumi:

The U.S. will not provide you as an individual with either military or financial support in your present effort to take over govt or to recapture city of Vientiane. We would view with greatest disapproval any effort set up rival govt or divide country. This could help only country's enemies. Accordingly, we advise you as friends to commence negotiations now while you appear strong, so that your position and influence will be preserved for the service of your country. Please keep U.S. informed.

Do not regard Zellweger as useful emissary this stage (A) in view his performance on Luang Prabang visit, and (B) importance having Phoumi hear U.S. views from U.S. source. Ideal emissaries would be Heintges and Jorgensen together but sending them or anyone from here, even with Souvanna's blessing, would be open misinterpretation many quarters, particularly if Phoumi disregards our advice.

Therefore feel best method is send someone from Bangkok to Savannakhet to present this message. If Sarit bought suggested approach, would be [best?] send someone along to support. Could Bangkok provide emissary and plane?[5]

As soon as emissary named and Dept approval sending him secured, would inform Brit, Fr and UN and approach Souvanna.

Brown

[5] See Document 379.

378. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 22, 1960—9:04 p.m.

222. Reference Deptel 696 to Paris rptd Vientiane 196.[2] As set forth in reftel important part of US concept during current Lao crisis has been effort avoid military clash between forces which should be preserved for defense against Pathet Lao. Embassy Vientiane has been properly concerned with avoidance of pitched battle for Vientiane and in favor of peaceful resolution which Lao generally desire. Nevertheless important as is avoidance of an armed clash, this objective must remain subordinate to our over-all objectives in Laos and we must continue be alert avoid its becoming an end in itself (which it probably is in case of British, French and Zellweger).

In furtherance our basic purpose preserving independence and integrity of Laos, a key objective must be establishment nominally neutral government friendly to West which will not mortgage itself to bloc or risk security of Kingdom by repetition of earlier fruitless flirtations with Pathet Lao and Viet Minh. Government of Souvanna Phouma as presently constituted would hardly meet this test. Souvanna's softness as well as his persistent and sometimes deceptive over-optimism need to be balanced by strong Foreign and Defense Ministers even in a government of temporary and provisional character. No one presently in Cabinet fills this specification and its members, except for dangerous Leftist Quinim, are mostly nonentities without prestige or top level experience. Therefore if we have to resign ourselves to working with Souvanna for a time, we will need at very least a substantial reshuffling of his Cabinet. This could perhaps best be arranged coincident with resolution of current crisis (as indeed your 355[3] suggests).

Another factor in situation is importance of avoiding any tendency to equate Phoumi with Kong Le as merely rival military leader. We remain most uncertain as to whether Kong Le has been truly downgraded as "adjutant" to General Ouan. We also find it hard to reach any conclusion as to Ouan's true position in relation to Souvanna, Phoumi, King Le and the coup.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2060. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Parsons, cleared with SEA, and approved by Dillon. Repeated to Paris, London, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Bangkok, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In this telegram, August 18, the Department explained to six interested Embassies including Paris that U.S. policy sought to maintain the maximum integrity of the anti-Communist groupings in Laos and to minimize the opportunities of the Pathet Lao to exploit the confusion resulting from the surprise capture of Vientiane by Kong Le's forces. (*Ibid.*, 661.51J/8–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnote 2, *supra*.

Another key objective in resolution of present crisis is preservation of Thai and Vietnamese faith in efficacy of US alliance. In our efforts armed clash which would only increase opportunities for Pathet Lao we must take care not have it appear to Thai and Vietnamese that we are any less staunch in our determination to contain Communists in FE than we were in 1959 and 1958. Therefore in seeking to play our hand adroitly in present confused Lao situation, we must at same time take care to reassure Thai and Vietnamese, because their reactions are of basic importance in connection with whole free world posture in Southeast Asia. It is in fact so important that we carry conviction with them that we must if necessary risk displeasing UK and French whose attitudes suggest they would go a long way to avoid trouble in Laos. They do not carry major responsibility in FE and we must view with concern any proposals from them which would make our basic task more difficult either now or later.

We are not overlooking fact that naive appeal, if such it be, of Kong Le for cessation of fractricidal strife, elimination of foreigners and friendship with everyone strikes popular note in Vientiane and perhaps more widely in Laos. His youthful and demagogic appeal to neutralism is in fact most dangerous and particularly so in a country situated as is Laos. Whether his coup was a reflection of naivete and irresponsibility or is allied with more sinister motivations, elimination of Kong Le from position of power would seem to be requirement for any resolution of crisis. This especially pertinent if Souvanna is to head government. General Phoumi has never had broad popular support even in Army. However events past two weeks may have enhanced his prestige. Whenever feasible we should exert our influence to associate with him maximum number of Lao who do command popular respect and liking.

If situation not soon resolved, foregoing considerations likely lead us to conclusion that our policy should evolve further in direction of forthright support of Phoumi. If PL and Viet Minh have thus far refrained from overt exploitation of Laos situation, one reason could be that they are satisfied with situation to date and do not wish provoke us into open support of Phoumi.

Dillon

379. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 22, 1960—10:31 p.m.

223. Your 364[2] and 368.[3] We agree with your statement of objectives although we would put reestablishment of broadly based pro-Western government as overriding objective. We have problem with your recommendations in that some appear amenable to early implementation while others are more difficult and probably require protracted negotiations such as you envisage. By presenting these recommendations as package we wonder whether we would not be preventing possible agreement on certain points because of fundamental disagreement on others. It appears that situation in Laos might be broken down under two headings: (1) security and (2) political. King himself has given cue by Palace Secretary's remark to Zellweger that immediate problem is for military themselves to settle.

1. Security. As we see it, there are two problems under this heading: (a) Kong Le's continued domination of Vientiane prolongs crisis and increases possibility of PL intervention; (b) preservation of Army in being by insuring its payment and supply is basic requirement. These two problems are urgent, concrete and if they can be solved promptly by Souvanna and Phoumi, this would be best solution. If they cannot be, appears to us only alternative is solution forced by Phoumi after establishing position of strength in Vientiane area. In view anticipated PL exploitation, solution cannot wait long if we are not to face yet bigger problem.

We do not at this moment discard first alternative because Souvanna and Ouan seem to have maneuvered Kong Le out of Vientiane and to have placed Ouan in position where he may have independent command of some rearmed troops and possibly police. If Souvanna and Phoumi could now quickly agree on temporary reorganization of General Staff, perhaps under General Ouan which would be responsible for two matters—reestablishment normal conditions in Vientiane and for provisioning troops in field—situation would be well in hand, as then joint request from Souvanna–Phoumi for airlift or drop in Vientiane area could meet quick response. Rees-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2260. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons and Chapman and cleared with SEA and with Dillon in draft. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, London, Paris, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 377.

[3] In telegram 368, August 22, the Embassy in Vientiane noted that all Phoumi had offered so far was a private statement of loyalty to the King and "hope that he could work with Souvanna Phouma." Phoumi continued to publicly oppose the Souvanna government. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2260; included in the microfiche supplement)

tablishment normal conditions in Vientiane would, of course, mean that General Staff would have at its command sufficient forces to check Kong Le in event he attempted new coup. First step in implementing this alternative would be dispatch Ouan or other acceptable emissary to Phoumi. If this cannot be done promptly, we would have to turn fully to second alternative.

Second alternative involves recognition as stated your 368 that Souvanna cannot act beyond his military capabilities and cannot dismiss Kong Le by his sole fiat. This being case, we would need reduce time-span of what is really Phoumi–Kong Le deadlock by building up former as rapidly as possible. Then, if Kong Le did not capitulate to combination of Phoumi's strength, Souvanna–Ouan persuasion and Lao aversion to fratricidal strife, it is still possible Kong Le's troops would disintegrate before fighting started. This is not agreeable alternative, but we feel increasingly time is running out.

2. Political. Once limited agreement reached to cope with immediate problem of security, longer-term problem of political resolution of crisis would be posed. We agree it unwise for us to determine too precisely form of compromise. This is more difficult to tackle at moment (if two-stage approach not adopted), since it appears there is fundamental difference between Souvanna and Phoumi. Souvanna considers that he has been legally appointed by King and invested by Assembly while Phoumi considers that Souvanna government is illegal since it was formed under duress. We have seen no indication of possible compromise as yet. Your recommendation 4 that we recognize Souvanna as Premier-designate would in fact make us party to what we have said is internal Lao affair (your recommendation 1). However once security problem is overcome there are number of other avenues to political resolution. King could make some use of Somsanith or he could call for new provisional government under Kou or other elder with Phoumi and Souvanna included. Alternatively, Souvanna and Phoumi could take initiative and go to King in Luang Prabang to say they have been unable to find mutually satisfactory agreement and recommend to King he appoint respected Prime Minister who should form interim Cabinet. Cabinet's mission would be to tranquillize spirits, investigate Kong Le coup to determine legitimate grievances within Army, seek to rectify these grievances, and at end of specified period, e.g., one to three months, return its mandate to Assembly with recommendation that regular government be established.

We rather inclined to agree with your recommendation that emissary from Embassy Bangkok should go to Phoumi once we have agreed on course of action. We do not see value from our viewpoint of Sarit emissary even for purpose proposed your message. Finally, in view of increasing conviction here that situation in areas readily subject to PL incursion must be deteriorating, we would be extremely

loath to move in direction of denying Phoumi support, particularly after just having given him reason to expect support. We do not, incidentally, believe that it is his objective to divide country, although we agree he has had and probably still has ambition to dominate it. Present crisis is so serious, however, that we now regard this as lesser hazard.

We are encouraged by Souvanna's attitude re payment of ANL (as reported your 367 just received)[4] and consider it important that payment be made if possible by August 25 through temporary General Staff on basis outlined above.

Dillon

[4] In telegram 367, August 22, the Embassy reported that Souvanna agreed that all Lao troops should be paid, thus keeping the issue out of the current political dispute. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2260; included in the microfiche supplement)

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380. Editorial Note

On August 23, representatives of the Departments of State and Defense, including members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met at the Pentagon to discuss Laos. The meeting was called because of a belief by Under Secretary of State Dillon and Secretary of Defense Gates that their two agencies had different conceptions of what should be done in Laos.

Assistant Secretary of State Parsons began by briefing the group on the results of a meeting on August 23 at Savannakhet by the leaders of the Lao factions, Souvanna Phouma and Phoumi Nosavan on the one hand and Ouan Ratikon and an unnamed representative of Kong Le on the other, in which "both sides had reached an agreement which they felt would help restore complete order in the country. One of the reports further added that Phoumi was impressed with the courage shown by Souvanna Phouma, that Phoumi thought this was the first step toward resolution of the whole situation and that both sides agreed that neither government was legal. Phoumi was quoted as saying that the first priority was the reuniting of the military commands, followed by a national assembly meeting in Luang Prabang. Souvanna Phouma had said he did not want to be Prime Minister and General Ouan said he would try to influence the military to accept the arrangement. The Kong Le representative observed that Kong Le had given arms to some 3,000 Pathet Lao. On hearing this Phoumi re-

quested the Kong Le forces to get the arms back from the Pathet Lao and this was agreed to. The meeting was reported to have ended on very friendly terms."

Parsons then explained that Phoumi's forces would receive from the United States 100 tons of rice and 8 million kip for troop payments. The Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed their concern that the United States was not supporting Phoumi as fully or as aggressively as it should. Merchant responded that the rice and the kip payments were examples of support, but he asked for suggestions of other possible tactical steps. Parsons added that Phoumi was not popular with the Lao people. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and Gates answered that they wanted to give Phoumi clear and tangible evidence of U.S. support. As Gates put it: "the $64 question was, does he know he is our boy? If he goes into his negotiations or goes into his war knowing that, that is what we want." Merchant agreed that a message to this effect could be sent to Phoumi, but reminded the group that the "underlying philosophy" of U.S. policy in Laos was to obtain a strong and broadly-based anti-Communist Lao government by negotiation. Gates doubted that this policy could work without direct U.S. intervention, given that the Pathet Lao were better led and probably better motivated. (Department of State, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 70 D 328; included in the microfiche supplement)

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381. Letter From the Chargé in Thailand (Unger) to Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat[1]

Bangkok, August 24, 1960.

EXCELLENCY: I know that Your Excellency will be interested in a message which has been recently dispatched from the United States Government in Washington to the PEO Liaison Officer who is now with General Phoumi in Savannakhet. In this message it is noted that

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2560. Secret. The text of this letter was transmitted to the Department of State as an enclosure to despatch 107, August 25, in which Unger explained that he gave Sarit this letter because "I felt there would undoubtedly be a need for the Embassy to be approaching the Thai Government for its assistance in various matters to provide the indicated support to General Phoumi and that, especially in view of the Thai Government's support of General Phoumi, knowledge of our message would facilitate these activities greatly. I also was persuaded that General Phoumi, who is in close touch with Marshal Sarit, would undoubtedly be informing the latter of the receipt of this message in any case." (Included in the microfiche supplement)

General Phoumi is already aware of the confidence which the United States Government has in him and of the constant support of him as a patriotic anti-Communist. The Liaison Officer is instructed to tell General Phoumi at the earliest opportunity that the United States looks to him as the main prop in Laos against the drift of his country into a situation in which it would be possible for the Pathet Lao to take over Laos. The Liaison Officer is also to tell General Phoumi that the United States is working urgently to fulfill his recent requests and that he can count in the future on our meeting all reasonable requests for help in the financial and logistical fields. The Liaison Officer is to conclude by stating that General Phoumi continues to have our encouragement and moral support.

I feel sure that you will agree with me that this message marks a constructive step in the present troubled situation in Laos.

Respectfully,

Leonard Unger[2]

[2] Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

382. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 25, 1960—midnight.

385. Manila for MLG. Addressees pass interested agencies. Arrangements for pay being pressed urgently here. We giving all assistance. Rice problem covered separate message.[2]

Message delivered Souvanna orally with some changes. Text follows: "We are encouraged by recent reports of agreement between you and Phoumi for common effort to reestablish security Vientiane and in country generally and for establishment firm constitutionally based government. USG has become deeply concerned by reports indicating deterioration of situation around Vientiane as well as by need to support army in field. Phoumi has been informing US representatives in field of his growing difficulties in supplying his troops. In answer

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2560. Secret; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok, Paris, Phnom Penh, Saigon, London, Manila, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Apparent reference to telegrams 381 and 383 from Vientiane, both August 25. (Both *ibid.*, 751J.551/8–2560; included in the microfiche supplement)

Phoumi's pressing requests, we informed him as I informed you we would continue to meet army's financial and logistical needs. We have also told him we continued hope solution which all patriotic elements could support can be achieved by peaceful means. Such solution ensuring Pathet Lao should not benefit would have our full support. You and Phoumi can count on our support in efforts to reach it." Souvanna expressed appreciation US support and efforts find peaceful solution.

Message to Phoumi[3] sent unchanged. Believed sending EmbOff would be misinterpreted. Have advised Addis substance messages. His reaction reported Embtel 387.[4] Will see Falaize and Zellweger tomorrow.

Resuming use State channels. Others used yesterday because reports delay receipt State messages.

Brown

[3] See *supra.*

[4] According to telegram 387, August 25, British Ambassador Addis was "shocked" that the United States had expressed confidence in Phoumi as the main barrier to the Pathet Lao because it might make him more unwilling to compromise with Souvanna. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2560; included in the microfiche supplement)

383. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, August 28, 1960—11 a.m.

407. Manila for MLG. Addressees pass interested agencies. Ref: Deptel 243 rptd Bangkok 256,[2] Bangkok's 368 to Dept rptd Vientiane 214.[3] Concur informing Sarit our messages Phoumi and Souvanna but believe important he should also be informed of second message to

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2860. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, London, Paris, and Manila.

[2] In telegram 243 to Vientiane, August 26, the Department suggested that Unger stress to Sarit that the United States believed that force should be used only after it became clear that reasonable efforts for a peaceful settlement had failed. The U.S. objective was elimination of Kong Le's influence and preservation of Lao independence and territorial integrity. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–2560; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 368 from Bangkok, August 27, Unger reported that Ambassador Johnson was returning to Bangkok that night and would meet with Sarit. Telegram 396, August 30, reported that Johnson met with Sarit for 2 hours on the morning of August 30 and made the points as the Department suggested in the telegram printed here. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2760 and 751J.00/8–3060, respectively; both included in the microfiche supplement)

Phoumi sent through me[4] in which we mention our encouragement at common effort being made by Phoumi and Souvanna to find peaceful solution. Sarit could well be told again, as he has already been told, of our confidence in Phoumi, our efforts to help Somsanith government before its resignation, our opposition Kong Le, and our belief essentiality maintenance FAL as barrier PL, and our efforts see it paid and fed. Phoumi and Ouan (not Souvanna) are negotiating on pay and we supporting any agreement they reach. But he should also be convinced our support Phoumi not complete blank check and is contingent upon Phoumi's cooperating in seeking solution which will reestablish firm government and unified command of military and avoid outside intervention and internal bloodshed.

Agreement Assembly meeting Luang Prabang and more moderate tone Radio Savannakhet encouraging evidence such cooperation by Phoumi as is Souvanna's statement he prepared resign, accept verdict Assembly, and report that if chosen again as Prime Minister he would enlarge Cabinet to include former Ministers. On debit side is Ouan's reported increasing bitterness as result Phoumi accusations he Communist, increasing anti-Thai feeling here as result continued Thai blockade Vientiane, and rumored Thai support Phoumi, and failure to date recover arms from villagers.

Have not yet told Zellweger about messages as dubious his discretion as result his performance on Luang Prabang visit.

Thai Ambassador in considerable agitation and busy evacuating Thai nationals. Will try send estimate his views separately. Am not informing him of messages.

Brown

[4] See Document 382.

384. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, August 30, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

State feels that there are two hypotheses regarding the agreement between Phoumi and Souvanna.[2] The optimistic hypothesis is that the two have gotten together to unify Laotians against Pathet Lao. The gloomy hypothesis, which appears to be borne out by the actions of Souvanna in the last few days, is that Souvanna is aiming to head a fully legal government which would compromise with the Pathet Lao and accommodate with Hanoi. To accomplish this, Souvanna would have to neutralize Phoumi rather than Kong Le.

State feels, therefore, that the U.S. must play a cautious game. If the meeting between Souvanna Phouma and the king at Luang Prabang results in a government in which Phoumi is a member (which now appears to be the case), then the U.S. could lend its support to that government. If Phoumi is excluded from the government, however, then we believe we must take every precaution to protect Phoumi against Souvanna. At this moment we are attempting to get the troops paid and fed to retain their loyalty. The situation is complicated by the fact that Ouane, the army chief of staff under Souvanna, is embittered by Phoumi's recent accusation that he is a Communist.

Many things are transpiring to keep the situation highly confused. The French still insist that Kong Le represents "deep feeling in Laos." Indeed, the rumor is strong in Vientiane that the French were behind this coup. Brown is optimistic to the extent that the Luang Prabang meeting will bring forth a government more pro-Western than the present Souvanna and perhaps even Phoumi.[3]

The enigma in the whole situation is Kong Le who has stated that if the Luang Prabang assembly forms a cabinet not to his liking, he will replace Souvanna. The Pathet Lao radio has taken a position that since the assembly has repudiated its former action in Vientiane and is now meeting in Luang Prabang, it is subjecting itself to the same duress in reverse as it was before. Thus, as a gimmick, the Phoumi group hopes that Somsanith will withdraw his resignation and con-

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Set forth in telegram 245 to Vientiane, August 27. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Reported in telegram 417 from Vientiane, August 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2960; included in the microfiche supplement)

vene the assembly in his old position prior to the formation of a Souvanna government.[4]

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[4] Reported in telegram PEO 2400, from Fromer at Luang Prabang to the Department of State, August 29. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–2960; included in the microfiche supplement)

385. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 30, 1960—8:44 p.m.

255. At high-level interagency meeting afternoon August 30th[2] serious concern was expressed over return new cabinet to Vientiane in light Kong Le's apparent continuing control of city. It recognized that Ministers themselves best judges of risks to their freedom of action but as viewed from here, new government could be walking into trap. Accordingly it was felt that this concern should be expressed to Souvanna directly and immediately and that he should be told if RLG needed support to deal with Kong Le, we would be prepared to help as feasible. It was thought that, to have real weight, this message should preferably be delivered by you personally in Luang Prabang. However, it was appreciated that your going there alone immediately after government had been invested might put you in awkward position. Such action might also strengthen whatever latent suspicion Kong Le might have of this cabinet. Therefore you may prefer to have message delivered to Souvanna by Fromer unless you perceive serious objection.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–3060. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman and Parsons and cleared with SEA and Merchant (in substance). Repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] At the Secretary's Staff Meeting on August 30, Merchant reported that he and Parsons planned to met with representatives of the Department of Defense and the CIA to discuss Laos on the afternoon of August 30. (*Ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75) No memorandum of conversation has been found for this meeting. A briefing memorandum from Anderson to Parsons, August 30, is *ibid.*, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, Political Affairs, Coup Aug. 9 1960; included in the microfiche supplement.

Reply your 422[3] under preparation.

Herter

[3] In telegram 422, August 30, the Embassy requested permission to hold up release of U.S. aid funds until the new government under Souvanna Phouma gave assurances on the use of the aid, maintenance of the armed forces, reintegration of the Pathet Lao into Lao society, and the composition of his prospective cabinet. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

386. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, August 31, 1960—4:57 p.m.

258. 1. Although new government has been approved by Assembly (your 444)[2] we deeply concerned by position Kong Le has now assumed in opposing inclusion Phoumi and Inpeng (your 439).[3] This may result in break up of cabinet which though far from ideal seems about as good as can be expected under circumstances. We appreciate delicacy of situation but consider US must define its position in situation which now appears hanging in balance. Unity of non-Communist leaders which seems now to have been achieved with formation this new cabinet is imminently threatened by renewed pressure from Kong Le apparently with PL support. Therefore unless events have again moved beyond present point you should personally and immediately deliver message along following lines to Souvanna if he in Vientiane or through Fromer if in Luang Prabang:

"USG desires support his cabinet as now composed but would find it difficult to deal with a government which appeared to be subject to will of a rebel officer. Such a government could hardly be considered free or have necessary authority to discharge its functions. USG would appreciate knowing what specific actions RLG planning to undertake to reestablish its authority. If RLG considers it needs help to resolve present situation, USG prepared furnish such support as feasi-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–3160. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman; cleared with SEA, WE, BNA (in draft), and with the Department of Defense; and approved by Parsons. Also sent priority to Bangkok and Saigon and repeated to London, Canberra, Paris, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Dated August 31. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/8–3160)

[3] In telegram 439, August 31, the Embassy reported that Radio Vientiane was broadcasting indications of Kong Le's strong opposition to inclusion of Phoumi and Inpeng in Souvanna's government. (*Ibid.*)

ble. For example, USG would be prepared move men of first paratroop battalion now training in Thailand to whatever location in Laos RLG desired."

2. We also find it unacceptable that only troops of 5th Military Region (including rebel 2nd paratroop battalion) have apparently been paid (SITREP Aug. 30, para. 20).[5] You (or alternately Fromer and/or PEO regional rep) should therefore deliver this additional message to both Souvanna and Ouane, with Chief PEO participating as you consider desirable:

"USG which responsible for financing military budget finds it impossible understand why no troops have apparently been paid except those in 5th Military Region. Thus troops innocent of present situation are being penalized and a premium given to rebel soldiers. No military establishment can long exist under these circumstances. Therefore rather than witness deterioration FAL, US Govt would be prepared help meet needs of troops outside Vientiane in answer to requests from regional commanders."

3. Above messages should be passed to Phoumi.

4. Department planning call in British, French and Australians today to inform them of Kong Le's threat and propose we all make separate approaches to Souvanna along lines first three sentences of our message to him (para. 1 above). In view inadequate communications Thai and Vietnamese Embassies here, Bangkok and Saigon should make parallel representations.

5. Events moving so rapidly it impossible obtain your comments prior consultation with allies here, but we strongly feel it essential that Souvanna's backbone be stiffened at this crucial time and that Phoumi be aware our continued confidence in him as staunch anti-Communist and our full support for broadly based and constitutional cabinet which unites responsible non-Communist elements.

6. Question our public posture re RLG and Kong Le's apparent defiance thereof may also have to be faced at any moment. If time permits we would appreciate your suggestions. If not we will use some

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[5] Paragraph 20 of situation report 20, August 30, [*document number not declassified*], reads:

"(Noforn) Info Vientiane 30 August is that second para units paid 29 August, fifth milreg being paid 30 August, others still supposedly waiting approval Gen Ouan. United States Ambassador has passed message for Ouan in Luang Prabang urging release of pay to other milregs on 30 August. *Comment:* to pay troops in Vientiane promptly while dragging feet of payment remainder of army, could undercut position Phoumi with his forces." (Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Lao Situation Reports)

variant of formula that we support an RLG which vigorously seeks to maintain independence and integrity of Kingdom. We would add situation not yet clear enough to warrant further comment.

Herter

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387. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 5, 1960—12:32 a.m.

275. Vientiane's 462.[2]

1. Phoumi's position reemphasizes our conviction expressed para. 1 Deptel 269[3] that Kong Le problem must be dealt with first. Phoumi has legitimate fear for his safety. We not overly impressed by Souvanna's oral assurances. We only note that Kong Le retains capabilities of controlling government and at same time Souvanna proceeding with negotiations with PL conceivably leading to situation dominated by PL and Kong Le. As we see it therefore need is for early action by Souvanna to reestablish RLG's authority in Vientiane and thus persuade Phoumi to return.

2. We believe that dissident movement led by Phoumi would have incalculable consequences. It would revive strong regional sentiments and very possibly provoke external intervention. It would seem have hardly any chance of success. It not difficult imagine situation wherein Souvanna in Vientiane would be supported by DRV and Phoumi in south by Thailand and GVN. In sum we do not see how present situation can be satisfactorily resolved by force. At same time

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–460. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman and Usher, cleared with OSD/ISA, and approved by Parsons. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 462, September 4, Brown stated that the "essential next step here is get Phoumi into government." Brown reported that Phoumi himself was resisting U.S. suggestions to return to Vientiane as a member of the Souvanna Cabinet and was talking about "going it alone." (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 269, September 2, the Department of State provided Brown with an analysis of the Souvanna Cabinet and his past policies, stated that it considered the reduction of Kong Le's influence to be the primary problem, and authorized Brown to inform Souvanna of U.S. support provided his government was not under Pathet Lao control nor followed policies leading to a Communist takeover. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–160; included in the microfiche supplement)

we fear that unless Souvanna reasserts RLG's authority in Vientiane permitting Phoumi's return, Phoumi may very well carry out his threat.

3. Therefore believe you should immediately present to Souvanna US views concerning problem of insuring Phoumi's effective inclusion in cabinet along following lines:

a. US agrees with Souvanna that it urgently desirable for Phoumi return to Vientiane and take up his role in cabinet. However we do not see how Phoumi can be expected to do this while there is serious question even on such crucial point as his personal safety in Vientiane and while Kong Le and second paratroop battalion continue in effect control situation in Vientiane. While US desires support Souvanna's cabinet as now composed, increasingly difficult to see how as practical matter any meaningful support can be rendered in situation where RLG unable establish control its administrative capital and key figure in cabinet cannot safely enter the city.[4]

b. Clarification of situation in Vientiane could presumably be accomplished by appointment of commander of military forces in Vientiane personally loyal to RLG, invested with necessary authority and supported by battalion of new troops from outside and who would thus be able insure RLG control of Vientiane and personal safety all members of cabinet. Action along these lines if acceptable to Phoumi might well provide a basis upon which the security of Vientiane could be established under the RLG's control and the entire cabinet could be reunited in Vientiane.

FYI. We fully recognize fact that success this proposal depends upon acceptability to Phoumi of military commander and battalion to be brought in. Nevertheless consider such solution urgently required to reunite cabinet and avert dangers you point out. End FYI.

4. Inform Phoumi your presentation to Souvanna but warn him US cannot support separatist movement. US continues consider Phoumi's participation in government most important. Without it Communist hand would be materially strengthened.[5]

5. Concur your not responding to Boun Oum. Recall that in 1956 belief existed certain Lao circles US backing southern secessionist movement. Such belief most harmful and contrary to US policy which seeks maintain integrity of Kingdom.

Merchant

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[4] In telegram 474 from Vientiane, September 6, Brown reported that he made these points to Souvanna, who denied that Kong Le was still in control of Vientiane. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] In telegram 476 from Vientiane, September 6, the Embassy reported that it sent the following message to Phoumi:

"Have today urged strongly on Souvanna importance insuring your safety Vientiane. He assures me you entirely safe.

"USG believes your participation in government most important. US cannot support you in any separatist movement or effort resolve situation by force." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–660)

388. Editorial Note

At the 458th meeting of the National Security Council on September 7, in his usual briefing, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security," Allen Dulles reported on the situation in Laos as follows:

"Turning finally to Laos, Mr. Dulles said the situation there continued unsettled. Last week he had reported to the Council on the formation of a new cabinet. As anticipated, Phoumi has not dared to go back to Vientiane as long as Kong Le was in control there. Phoumi was still in Savannakhet. Souvanna Phouma was urging him to return to Vientiane and had undertaken to secure his safety. Phoumi, however, was not likely to return voluntarily as long as Kong Le had arms. Souvanna Phouma had set a time limit of two days for his return. Phoumi would like an American guarantee of his safety. Mr. Dulles observed that such a guarantee would be difficult to carry out without force of arms. Souvanna Phouma meanwhile was engaged in negotiations with the Pathet Lao which, Mr. Dulles felt, were somewhat ominous. Phoumi is Sarit's nephew and is in touch with him. Mr. Dulles stated that he felt it would be unwise for the Thais to guarantee Phoumi's safety.

"Secretary Herter observed that a good deal depended on what Phoumi wanted to do. Why he accepted the Vice Premiership, knowing the danger involved in returning to Vientiane, was not certain. Whether he accepted the Vice Premiership in good faith was not clear. Phoumi's situation is complicated because of his relationship to Sarit; there were rumors that the Thais were involved in backing him." (Memorandum of discussion, September 7; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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389. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 9, 1960—9:16 p.m.

289. Your 465[2] and 473.[3]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–660. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Chapman and Parsons and cleared with SEA and John Holdridge of CA. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, Moscow, Taipei, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 4, Document 395.

[3] Dated September 6. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–660; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. Reftels indicate Souvanna is considering seeking take one or all of following steps in foreign affairs field to buttress his announced policy of neutrality:

a. Accredit Lao Embassy Paris to USSR and Soviet Embassy Bangkok to Laos.
b. Reduce GVN's representation to Legation level.
c. Reduce GRC's Consulate to commercial representation.
d. Perhaps establish consular relations with Peiping and/or Hanoi (though it not clear whether he has this move also in mind).

2. We do not believe any such step in real interest of Laos since it would only encourage further bloc demands for broader relations (diplomatic, cultural, economic, and eventually military). Such bloc representation would strengthen organized native NLHX party (against which there is yet no effective counter organization) and thus effect deepening Communist penetration of country. In its exposed position Laos would be hard put to resist such a drift of events.

3. Above is basic argument but following further argumentation may be used in discussing this subject:

a. Accreditation of Soviet Embassy would be first step toward further demands, e.g. request to set up information mission in Vientiane.
b. Once official relations established any change in such relations carries strong political connotation. Furthermore once established it is difficult to terminate bloc representation if RLG should belatedly decide it acting contrary to Laos best interests. Souvanna will remember how tenaciously Poles opposed his request to ICC to leave Laos.
c. Reduction Vietnamese and Chinese levels of representation would not alter Communist plans re Laos, but would be interpreted as unfriendly act by GVN and probably by RTG, neighbors with which Laos has had increasingly cordial and beneficial relations during past few years, as well as by GRC with which RLG has been developing fruitful exchanges.
d. This step would also discourage elements Chinese and Vietnamese communities which look to Taipei and Saigon and encourage elements looking to Peiping and Hanoi, leading to increased Chinese Communist and Vietminh subversion and thereby creating additional internal problems.
e. Effect of such steps would be that Laos would be considered as having moved toward bloc. It is questionable that this new position would satisfy bloc and on contrary might well encourage it to intensify its action toward fixed goal of taking over Laos. In fact it is doubtful that bloc pressures on RLG would diminish until Laos had submitted to bloc directions. Instead of achieving a peaceful middle situation, Laos would be precipitated into midst cold war.
f. Mere continuance GVN and GRC representation cannot legitimately be considered provocative. Even if it were, removal of alleged provocation would quickly lead to a new bloc allegation of provocation and redoubled pressures in attempt to exploit demonstrated softness of RLG to such tactics.

g. In summary we sympathize with Lao aspirations for peace and tranquility which are universally shared. Americans just as much as Lao would like to be free of burden of armaments and threats of conflict. But fact of this age is that organized international movement has set its goal as that of world conquest by whatever means feasible. Only way this movement has been stopped anywhere, any time is by confronting it with situation which it can alter only at risk great loss to itself. Lao should consider matter carefully before changing relations with tried friends in favor of relations with avowed enemies.

h. We of strong opinion that Laos best served by preserving its present international relations, continuing pursue policy bespeaking neutrality, and insuring its independence and territorial integrity through support of its traditional friends and UN. UN presence is in itself most important insurance of world-wide support.

4. If advice does not deter Souvanna from altering RLG's foreign policy, he might also be warned of dangers of trying to resolve his foreign affairs problems at time when he is engaged in trying reestablish internal unity. Risk he runs is that PL will seek exact larger concessions in foreign field as part price of internal peace. Souvanna should remember that there were no active bloc pressures upon RLG in this field until Kong Le coup and RLG's own announcements indicated bloc might gain access to Laos while also limiting existing free world ties. We feel Souvanna would be well advised to stall for time and evade bloc proposals which he must now be receiving with significantly increased frequency.

5. Cutting off aid is such blunt instrument that we prefer wait to assess total situation as it develops before making use of this threat.

Herter

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390. Editorial Note

On September 9, representatives of the Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff met to exchange views on Laos. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Merchant briefed the group on the most recent developments in Laos. Assistant Secretary of State Parsons expresed his concern over the effect that the crisis was having in Thailand and South Vietnam. Deputy Director for Central Intelligence General Charles P. Cabell then summarized a message informing Phoumi that it was safe for him to return to Vientiane and that Souvanna Phouma would allow him to bring a battalion of his choos-

ing and place his men in responsible positions in the new government. Cabell stated that this message should come from the Ambassador in Vientiane [*less than 1 line of text not declassified*]. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Irwin asked if this was not the first official U.S. Government contact with Phoumi. Irwin complained that the United States never supported Phoumi's requests nor gave him evidence of its sympathies for his cause. Merchant and Parsons contested this statement, citing the transfer of 8 million kip to Phoumi to pay his forces and rice shipments for his troops.

The discussion then turned to how safe it would be for Phoumi to go to Vientiane. Cabell stated that it was the consensus of the U.S. official community in Vientiane that there was a "reasonable expectation of safety." General Lemnitzer countered that Phoumi was the best judge of his own safety. Asked for his personal assessment of Phoumi, Parsons said that he "had grave doubts that in spite of all his good attributes Phoumi was the man to run Laos." Merchant concluded the discussion with a summation: only the Pathet Lao would benefit from civil war in Laos. Although Phoumi was the best judge of "whether or not he was walking into a trap," all believed it was essential that he return to Vientiane. Merchant admitted that should the Pathet Lao join Kong Le, the United States had to back Phoumi "100 per cent." But for the present, he continued, "a united non-communist front is still our best bet." (Memorandum of discussion, September 9; Department of State, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 70 D 328; included in the microfiche supplement)

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391. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 10, 1960—11 p.m.

502. Manila for MLG. CINCPAC for POLAD. Addressees pass interested agencies. Embassy officer and Army Attaché in presence [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] PEO representatives spent over hour with Phoumi Savannakhet this morning.[2] Most of time spent on question Phoumi return Vientiane, with Embassy officer

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1060. Secret; Niact. Repeated priority to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Manila, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] A fuller account of this meeting is in despatch 86 from Vientiane, September 27. (*Ibid.*, 715J.00/9–2760; included in the microfiche supplement)

presenting arguments in paraphrase appropriate portions Department telegrams 275[3] and 285.[4] Only shortly before end at 1140 hours Phoumi said he could reveal that at noon announcement would be made of revolution against Souvanna government in name Boun Oum.[5] In answer questions, Phoumi indicated Boun Oum name used as front, King not "well informed" re move but Boun Oum would send message offering loyalty to Crown, Vientiane to be placed under siege but not to be attacked (at least not immediately) and first four region commanders on his side. Phoumi's question whether explosion heard in Vientiane last night and whether airport damaged (when Embassy officers replied in negative Phoumi appeared surprised) interpreted by Embassy officers as indication possibility his plan sabotage city and prior knowledge lobbing two mortar shells from Thailand reported other messages.[6]

In reply Embassy officer arguments, Phoumi accused Souvanna as behind Kong Le coup and trying lure him Vientiane in order arrest him. Phoumi said accepted Cabinet post Luang Prabang only to insure his safe departure from city. Acknowledging Souvanna no Communist nor pro-PL, Phoumi said Souvanna has too much confidence in brother Souphanouvong and is risking loss of country to Communists as consequence. Phoumi said had unsuccessfully urged Souvanna avoid using Vientiane as captial temporarily, setting up instead Luang Prabang or Savannakhet. Meanwhile, General Bouleuth as FAL commander four outside military regions and Ouan in Vientiane as military governor should return situation to normal. RLG could then return Vientiane and Phoumi would come along. Phoumi said his return under present circumstances while Souvanna unable exercise authority would play into hands PL by reducing his influence countryside while Communists infiltrated Laos. Phoumi said PL attacks in north and on bridges in south disproving Souvanna thesis he could deal with PL. Phoumi said PL attempting recapture Phong Saly and Houa Phan (Sam Neua) provinces in order return status quo 1957 and thus be in position negotiate from strength with Souvanna, though real PL

[3] Document 387.

[4] In telegram 285, September 7, the Department instructed Brown to inform Souvanna that the U.S. Government insisted that Phoumi remain in the Cabinet and that it would not support a separatist movement or an attack on Vientiane by Phoumi. In addition, the Department believed that if Phoumi returned to Vientiane he could significantly minimize the influence of the Pathet Lao and therefore preserve the integrity of Laos. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–760)

[5] According to telegram 501 from Vientiane, September 10, Boun Oum declared at 1 p.m. on September 10 on Radio Savannakhet that as the leader of the revolutionist party he was declaring the present government and constitution abolished. Boun Oum announced the establishment of martial law throughout Laos. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–1060; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Not further indentified.

goal military take over country which required military solution he advocated rather than dangerous present course of Souvanna pushing on with negotiations.

At least twice, Phoumi said he understood position USG, which could only assist legal government. All I ask of US, he said, was to let me go ahead and judge me afterwards in light what happens. He also repeated contention in case he fired from cabinet, Souvanna government would fall, leaving impression this might be part his plan try return Laos to recent situation with two non-legal governments at same time.

Comment: Believe Phoumi decision made some time ago since today's new counter-coup announcement required advance preparation. Situation in effect now returns that previous counter-coup committee this time behind new facade. Rather than imminent outbreak active hostilities, feel can expect renewal psychological warfare and jockeying for most tenable legal and constitutional positions.

Brown

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392. Editorial Note

On September 10, the Department of State issued a press release on what it described as a "revolution" in Laos by Prince Boun Oum and General Phoumi against the Souvanna Phouma government. The Department of State noted in the release that it had consistently supported the duly-constituted governments of Laos against Communist subversion in the past. The Department regretted that the unity of the non-Communist forces in Laos was threatened, reiterated its desire not to intervene in the affairs of Laos, and warned other "outside powers, or the agents thereof" not to take advantage of the disturbed situation in Laos either directly or indirectly. The text of this statement is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, September 26, 1960, p. 499.

Prior to the release of this statement, Secretary Herter telephoned General Goodpaster at the White House at 12:50 p.m., September 10, to discuss Laos and the issuance of the statement. The memorandum of conversation reads as follows:

"The Secretary said we had a revolution in Laos on our hands and he then read a statement which we were thinking about putting out. Goodpaster said he was certain this is the way the President understands it. Goodpaster asked if the implication was that Phoumi was moving against the King. The Sec. said he has told the King he is not.

There was a danger of a secessionist movement. Goodpaster said he would send word to the President but he didn't think there would be anything further needed on that." (Eisenhower Library, Herter Papers, Memoranda of Telephone Conversations)

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393. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 10, 1960—7:07 p.m.

294. 1. Secretary has instructed you seek audience with King soonest. You should request audience through Souvanna as Foreign Minister with whom you should discuss démarche frankly. You might suggest Somsanith accompany you and you should also seek associate other Ambassadors with démarche. We are so advising French, British and Australian Embassies and UNSYG.

2. Your presentation to King should be along following lines:

a. You should state you acting under instructions from Secretary.

b. We consider country for first time since independence is facing real threat of dismemberment—with region rising against region and Army faction against Army faction. Unity patriotic elements appears broken. In this chaotic situation Pathet Lao can with little effort deepen divisions and significantly further their objective of taking over country.

c. Under these circumstances we can see no peaceful solution unless King effects royal reconciliation under his authority.

d. US has consistently supported constituted governments of Laos which sought to maintain independence and integrity of country and to this end has encouraged unity of patriotic elements. With continuing independence of country threatened by civil war and Pathet Lao, US seeks know how King views situation and what are King's intentions and wishes.

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1060. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by Usher, and approved by Parsons. Repeated priority to Bangkok, Paris, London, and Canberra and to Saigon, Phnom Penh, CINCPAC for POLAD, and USUN.

394. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, September 13, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

On September 10th Phoumi indicated his intention to start a revolution.[2] The success would of course depend on the degree of support he still enjoys in the Army. Phoumi was not satisfied by new concessions offered by Souvanna through a delegation of army officers sent to Savannakhet on September 9th.[3] Laotian Army reports indicate increased Pathet Lao guerrilla activities in four different areas of North Laos.[4]

Prince Boun Oum joined Phoumi in this action on September 10th and Souvanna declared a state of emergency. Souvanna conferred with the king on September 11th and the king invited rebels to come to Luang Prabang for further consultations.[5] Phoumi is apparently receiving at least moral support from Thailand.[6]

Meanwhile, State instructed Ambassador Brown to seek an audience with the king and point out our fears that Laos is faced with a real threat of dismemberment due to the disintegration of the unity of patriotic elements. Brown is to emphasize that we see no peaceful solution outside of a royal reconciliation under the authority of the

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[1] Source: Eisehower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in Document 391.

[3] Reported in Joint Situation Report 30, [*document number not declassified*], September 9. (Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

[4] Reported in Joint Situation Report 29, [*document number not declassified*], September 8. (*Ibid.*)

[5] Reported in telegram 512 from Vientiane, September 11. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1160; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] The Embassy in Bangkok reported in telegram 462, September 10, that there was "positive confirmation that Sarit last night sent a message to Phoumi to effect that while decision of course Phoumi's, considering all circumstances Sarit believed Phoumi should return to Vientiane." Information available to the Embassy also confirmed that Sarit was not giving any material support to Phoumi and had made it clear to Phoumi that he could expect no support from Thailand. The Embassy concluded that "Sarit is playing square with us" and even going against his own convictions. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1060)

king.[7] we are particularly concerned that Kong Le will join with the Pathet Lao. The French refused to join us in this démarche to the king.[8]

The U.S. is in a little bit of a spot here since while we feel the best solution would be a return to the Souvanna government on the part of Phoumi, we hesitate to choose sides with neutralist Souvanna in the light of Phoumi's pro-U.S. orientation. Finally, the issue is now so full of emotion we are trying to avoid becoming identified with one solution.

Brown has also been instructed to point out to both General Ouan (Souvanna's armed forces commander) and Phoumi that we cannot stand by in the face of renewed Pathet Lao activities in the north while military commanders are engaged in political activities. If necessary, we will also support troops directly ourselves.[9]

Phoumi and Prince Boun Oum have sent emissaries to the king to explain the reasons for their rebellion against Souvanna. Their solution would be the formation of a new government under Boun Oum with Phoumi as armed forces commander. They would "prefer" to retain Souvanna in the cabinet.

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[7] See *supra*. Reports of Brown's audience with King Savang, who refused to attempt a reconciliation between Souvanna and Phoumi, are in telegram 521 and 522 from Vientiane, both September 13. (Both in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

[8] Reported in telegram 514 from Vientiane, September 12. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1260)

[9] Instructed in telegram 299 to Vientiane, September 12. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5622/9–1260)

395. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 15, 1960—9 p.m.

536. Addressees pass interested agencies. Throughout current crisis, US has, correctly in my view, refrained from intervention in hope Lao would find effective solution their problem in their own way.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1560. Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, and London. Received at 4:33 p.m.

Solution found LP has not worked out as hoped and despite legal establishment Souvanna govt, US, in words Deptel 391,[2] has "hesitated take position which might be interpreted as full endorsement Souvanna (who known neutralist) and condemnation Phoumi (who known pro-US), leading to serious doubts US objectives in Laos both in that country and in area."

Uncertainties present position with stalemate between opposing claimants, unwillingness King exert decisive influence one side or other is leading increased disregard established legal procedures, undermining authority central govt, and benefiting PL. I believe time has now come when continuation these conditions unacceptable for US and free world interests and that US must now exercise its still considerable and perhaps decisive influence. Army and govt must be united soon.

Three alternatives exist: (1) Support Phoumi and Boun Oum, (2) inaction leading probably to resignation Souvanna, and (3) full support Souvanna govt with last effort convince Phoumi his and best interests country lie in his cooperation perhaps as C-in-C FAL.

First alternative completely unacceptable since it would involve support group which has, by own announcement, abrogated legal govt, Assembly and Constitution.

Result second alternative uncertain and risky. Souvanna might hang on for considerable time. Phoumi would continue with program sabotage, psywar and assassination (e.g., partly successful sabotage last night waterworks which only municipal supply pure water Vientiane civilians). PL would take advantage divided Army command exploit situation their advantage. US would be confronted series impossible decisions (e.g., how pay Army and civilians and how support military effort against PL where needed. Also possibly involve appeal to UN which could raise many problems for US.).

Believe most unwise US try hasten Souvanna resignation or to direct composition new govt. Believe also unwise say anything to Khamphan this juncture. If new govt should be clearly Boun Oum/Phoumi, result sooner or later certainly sharp to violent PL reaction, trouble Vientiane, and possible new coup Vientiane. Any popular feelings brought to surface by Kong Le coup would be now frustrated and composition and capacity govt plus extent its popular support highly uncertain. If Souvanna were willing serve as Deputy PriMin under Boun Oum and Phoumi willing remain only as C-in-C, adverse reaction probably much less sharp.

[2] Dated September 12. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

Despite Phoumi abilities and strong anti-Communist convictions, events past few weeks have detracted his effectiveness as our main reliance against Communism here. Revolt in his elite troops, his refusal return Vientiane, his advocacy policy force rather than conciliation which is distasteful to combat psywar Lao, his influences in coup against legal govt in which he had himself accepted major role, feelings of many that he had rigged elections, et cetera, have created considerable opposition to him.

Souvanna, on other hand, has considerable personal popularity and his policies have considerable popular support. Should he disappear from political scene, highly important moderating factor in Lao political life would be lost. He overestimates his own powers. He is not a particularly good organizer and perhaps not too clear a thinker. He may lack will power in pinches and he certainly lacks support of the King. His policy of greater neutralism has many risks. Yet he is not Communist and many indications he has learned since 1957. He still wishes have Phoumi in govt and participate in PL negotiations. He has broken off PL negotiations because of current divided posture govt not wishing negotiate from weakness. (This confirmed to me today by Burmese Min as result his talks majority Souvanna ministers. Souvanna told Zellweger recently there should be no negotiations with PL but only discussions implementation 1957 agreements. Starting new negotiations, he said, would lead to interminable process; if agreement reached PL would ask for something more and further negotiation would ensue.)

I doubt whether really true that Army can only be united around Phoumi. I believe that if we made it known that Souvanna government had complete control pay and supplies which our aid provides, regional commanders would not be long in following his orders. Civil functionaries would follow suit (Embtel 521).[3]

US influence still of enormous importance, whichever party in power. But in many ways able exert greater influence over Souvanna than bull-headed Phoumi. Former has fewer personal blind spots and is not consumed by same personal ambition. Doesn't need to be. He is already important national figure and will remain so regardless of what happens.

Part of wisdom for US is now to support Souvanna wholeheartedly and openly for following reasons:

A) Will be supporting greater segment of national feeling.

B) Mixture carrot and stick usually better than stick alone, especially with Lao.

[3] See footnote 7, Document 394.

C) Will be supporting legally constituted govt, not group which has shown itself willing publicly ignore govt, Assembly and Constitution at will.

D) Can command full support UK, France and UN, and powerful neutrals such as India, though discouraging Thailand and S. Vietnam.

E) Will discomfit PL and Communists by US support same man they are supporting, and show Lao people US supports their preferred and legally constituted choice.

F) Surest way keeping Kong Le and his cohorts in Vientiane under control until effectively united.

I feel however that before giving such support we should get certain assurances from Souvanna. Among them:

A) Assurance that his policy will be to have no negotiations with the PL until FAL is reunited and they surrender territory seized since September 6.

B) That there should be no PL in his Cabinet.

C) That there should be no elections except perhaps for the additional seats for the Assembly which he has suggested. (Embtel 465)[4]

D) That US training teams should leave only when their job is completed, and necessary US MAP will continue.

E) That Gen Ouan should establish direct relations with regional commanders through which PEO could give them necessary support whether or not Phoumi approves.

F) That there should be no recognition of Communist China or the Vietminh and, if possible, Sov Russia.

G) That he would proclaim amnesty for Savannakhet group and its followers and would have Phoumi as C-in-C FAL if he could be persuaded to accept it.

H) That Minister of Interior be someone we can work with like [garble—Somsanith?].

I therefore recommend that I be authorized to tell Souvanna that if he will give these assurances US will declare openly its complete support his govt as duly constituted govt Laos and will state that all aid and support from the US for Laos will be channeled through his govt. That we will be prepared to carry through to the fullest and support him if he withholds pay or supplies to certain areas to convince them central govt and not Savannakhet group is real center of power in Laos. I recommend also that I be authorized see Phoumi personally and tell him this is US position in hope finally convincing him that US will not support his going alone. I should not urge Phoumi any further return Vientiane but leave that Souvanna, when equipped with full assurance US support.

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[4] Telegram 465, September 5, reported that Souvanna told Brown that he was considering suggesting an enlargement of the present National Assembly by 12 seats (1 for each province) as a way of deflecting the expected call for new elections. In this way, Souvanna could compensate for the at least partially rigged previous results. Even if the Pathet Lao won all 12 seats, Souvanna noted that they would not dominate the enlarged Assembly of 71. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–560)

All members Country Team concur with exception public affairs officer who evaluates public support Souvanna as less than indicated above, due reaction older conservative elements to what they believe to be trend toward Communist subversion in Vientiane area.

Brown

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396. Memorandum of Discussion at the 459th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, September 15, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting at item 1. The discussion on Laos was part of item 2, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security."]

Mr. Dulles reported that events in Laos were moving rapidly. The Phoumi government in Savannakhet had now been joined by Prince Boun Oum. The Prince was the head of an old family which had formerly ruled South Laos. He is loyal to the King, has a good reputation, and a high standing in Laos and will probably strengthen the Phoumi movement. During the last war he led the anti-Japanese resistance and has fought against Viet Minh. He is known to favor the alignment of Laos with the West. His regime has proclaimed the suspension of the constitution, has announced a new government which includes Phoumi, and has declared martial law. Mr. Dulles reported that our Ambassador had talked to the King at Luang Prabang. The King is inclined to shirk his responsibilities and is leaning toward the Prince Boun Oum regime. Souvanna Phouma does not seem to be in favor with the King at the moment. Mr. Dulles thought the U.S. would be facing several difficult decisions soon. He read a message [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] which indicated that Phoumi needs and wants immediate help, particularly in the form of money for the payment of the salaries of government officials and the army. [*2½ lines of source text not declassified*]

The President wondered why Phoumi did not eliminate the pockets of Pathet Lao resistance. Mr. Dulles said that Phoumi had no financial resources and no means of transport. Phoumi found it difficult to move in view of the Souvanna Phouma government which had been established in Vientiane and in view of the fact that Kong Le is

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Boggs on September 15.

still exercising some authority. Perhaps the U.S. should give Phoumi greater support in order to keep his movement alive. The President agreed that the U.S. should support Phoumi but remarked that history seems to show that revolutions are won by ragged mobs. He said Castro was an example of a revolutionary leader starting with a small group of men and winning power. Mr. Dulles said that Phoumi had three C–47's, two of which were out of commission. The President felt it might be possible to provide Phoumi with some additional C–47's. Secretary Dillon felt that the U.S. could not let the Phoumi movement be annihilated. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] He repeated that Phoumi's position had been strengthened by the recent acquisition of Prince Boun Oum.

[Here follow discussion unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Marion W. Boggs

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397. Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense (Gates)[1]

JCSM–415–60 *Washington, September 16, 1960.*

SUBJECT

Situation in Laos (U)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the situation in Laos remains serious. Revolutionary forces led by Prince Boun Oum, an anti-communist, seek to displace the Souvanna Government. The military forces are in danger of disintegrating into several factions thus losing their capacity to effectively contain communist insurgency.

2. It is still believed that an immediate and aggressive support of General Phoumi, which he has not yet received, would be desirable. However, the status of General Phoumi is now changed as he no longer holds and consistently refuses to accept office in the legal Royal Laotian Government.

3. The Department of State is working toward formation of a government in Laos headed by a respected and non-controversial Laotian whom General Phoumi can be persuaded to support.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD Files: FRC 64 A 2093, 092 Laos. Top Secret.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are in agreement with the views of the Commander in Chief, Pacific. [2]

5. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff propose that you recommend to the Secretary of State as a matter of urgency the following measures be undertaken:

a. Commence supplying FAL units via Phoumi using PEO [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] facilities as appropriate in lieu of Ouane/Souvanna channel as indicated State to Vientiane 299. [3]

b. Advise Phoumi to prepare for submittal to King broadest possible successor government to Souvanna Phouma with distinguished, anti-communist civilian (Boun Oum or Kou Abhay) as Prime Minister. If need be, Souvanna Phouma could be included in harmless post or given major diplomatic assignment to prevent exploitation by PL.

c. Encourage Phoumi with King's blessing promptly to liquidate Kong Le coup group even at cost of some bloodshed.

d. Persuade Sarit to arrange discreet transit of FAL troops through Thailand from Savannakhet to Vientiane.

e. Prepare promptly establish new government as "Neutral" not through rapprochement with bloc but through reiteration of traditional Laotian neutrality. [4]

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:
Arleigh Burke
Chief of Naval Operations

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[2] The views are set forth in telegram 142358Z from CINCPAC to JCS, September 14. (*Ibid.*, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170, 092 Laos)

[3] See footnote 9, Document 394.

[4] A note in the margin next to paragraph 5e reads: "No, see Lansdale memo." On September 16, Lansdale sent Irwin a memorandum commenting on this memorandum. Lansdale agreed with recommendations 5a through 5d, but he could not accept "neutrality" which he saw as strategically unsound. (Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 B 2170, 092 Asia; included in the microfiche supplement)

398. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 16, 1960—11:46 p.m.

316. Joint State–Defense message. Vientiane's 536.[2] Agree that continuation present stalemate leading to degradation situation in Laos unacceptable for US and Free World interests.

Re your three alternatives:

1. Agree that we cannot give full support to Boun Oum/Phoumi camp (to extent recommended by CINCPAC's 142358Z)[3] leading to their assumption of power because:

a. It would probably drive Kong Le and part 2nd Para Battalion into bush substantially and dangerously reinforcing PL.

b. It would raise serious doubts in minds of Lao and allies re value US word since US has consistently stated it supported legally constituted government and had warned Phoumi that it cannot support dissident movement.

c. We question degree of internal support Phoumi would receive upon being returned to power under US aegis and after campaign of siege, sabotage, and psychological warfare.

d. We would risk sharp break with some SEATO allies (UK, France, Australia, and New Zealand) quite conceivably leading to eventual collapse of organization.

e. It would greatly enhance likelihood large scale Communist insurgency.

f. Confronted by such insurgency, with limited popular support and international sympathy, Phoumi government might well eventually have to give way to neutralist government which would be prepared to make greater concessions to Communists than ever contemplated by Souvanna.

While this course of action might offer early solution, predictable consequences make it unacceptable. We would at best be gaining very short-term advantage at cost of long-term deteriorating situation.

2. Agree inaction now risky as it may prolong dangerous stalemate.

3. Full support Souvanna government as you propose is not acceptable because:

a. There would be no way to ensure that if Souvanna accepted our conditions he would ultimately wish or be able to abide by them.

b. This solution might not be able to stop Phoumi.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1560. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Drafted by Usher and Chapman and cleared with SEA, in draft with the Department of Defense, Merchant, Parsons, and Steeves. Repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 395.

[3] See footnote 2, *supra*.

c. Kong Le would be vindicated and might gain position of considerable long-run influence.

d. Adverse impact of this solution on situation in Thailand and Viet-Nam would not be balanced off by support from Western allies.

e. King would be opposed to this solution.

f. We would in effect be stuck with Souvanna who just does not have qualifications that are required to hold Laos against PL military and subversive tactics.

Foregoing for your background is Department's analysis on which following is based.

4. It appears to us that there is a fourth alternative and that is to seek bring to life new government which would be acceptable to majority patriotic elements. Again King appears key person. Therefore if by September 19 situation does not appear to move toward resolution, i.e., resignation Souvanna and creation new government you should immediately seek new audience with King to make presentation along following lines:

"Situation Laos continues degenerate; patriotic elements, Army, and country itself divided. PL intensifying their attacks in north. Law, order and constitution no longer respected. After coup, now revolution. Government in complete disorder. Kong Le still exercises baneful influence in Vientiane. Revolutionary movement threatening civil war. US fails see how Laos can survive if such situation is to continue very long. It has used its best efforts to encourage reconciliation all patriotic elements but to no avail. US is now reluctantly approaching decision that its aid can no longer be effectively used to help preserve independence of country. Therefore unless Lao resolve their internal divisions and restore unity of country Ambassador has been authorized to suspend all aid to government until a situation is brought about in which US aid can once more be effective.

"In US view solution might be sought as follows:

"King call to Luang Prabang principal personages of realm including Souvanna and Phoumi in attempt to bring about effective operation in Vientiane of Souvanna government as constituted in Luang Prabang on August 30 or, failing that, order them agree upon new governmental formula under widely respected figure (Deptel 308)[4] under whom Phoumi would serve and in which cabinet Souvanna might have position. Finally any government to govern effectively must from outset bring Kong Le under control."

5. In informing Souvanna of your request for audience with King you should make US position clear to him.

[4] In telegram 308, September 14, the Department suggested that a new Lao Government under Phoumi or Boun Oum would not reconcile the "broad segment of patriotic elements" in Laos and would not win free world support. The Department encouraged the Embassy to make a démarche to the King, in conjunction with the French and British Ambassadors if possible, for the appointment of a "government of national reconciliation" under a "widely respected figure." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1460; included in the microfiche supplement)

6. You should also immediately inform Phoumi that his program of sabotage and psychological warfare against Vientiane will cause strong adverse reaction both in Laos and abroad. You may use sabotage water works as example of destructive and useless action. You should tell Phoumi of terms of démarche to King.

7. FYI. Foregoing concept is based on paragraphs 15–20 of Operations Plan for Laos. Withdrawal of aid if such pressure is necessary would be undertaken gradually and this message does not mean we contemplate abandon Laos. If course of action contained this message fails to achieve our purpose, US will have to at such time consider any and all alternatives then open. None are foreclosed by present action. End FYI.

8. Defense [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] concur.

Dillon

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399. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 18, 1960—9 p.m.

555. Addressees pass interested agencies. Ref: Deptel 316.[2] Before proceeding to irrevocable action, I want to be sure that Washington fully understands immediate obstacles and risks involved.

(A) Believe action outlined para 4 reftel will encounter two immediate obstacles: (1) King's unwillingness take decisive action, (2) Phoumi's obstinacy. Even if King willing call conference there is distinct possibility Phoumi and Boun Oum may "respectfully" decline as they did last time (Embtel 522).[3] Not likely therefore that King will risk second snubbing, or act unless Souvanna first resigns.

B) I just don't see any "respected figure" on the horizon whom King is likely choose who could have leadership qualities or authority necessary control Kong Le, or to avoid being widely considered as Phoumi/US stooge.

C) Deptel 316 says that any government to govern effectively must from outset bring Kong Le under control. What is likely is that mere fame of Souvanna's resignation will lead Kong Le immediately try reoccupy Vientiane, with or without PL help, and chances are PL

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1860. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated priority to Bangkok, to London, Paris, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 1:29 p.m.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] See footnote 7, Document 394.

will start nationwide insurrection aided by increased covert assistance DRV. Therefore, before new government even has chance get organized and complete formalities necessary for investiture, Kong Le may be in far more powerful position than he is now and new government may be faced with serious PL problems all over country.

D) Souvanna at this juncture clearly only man who has been able restrain Kong Le and to carry appeal to him and his followers. Kong Le-ism is force that has to be reckoned with, even in FAL.

E) Situation would be exacerbated if on Souvanna resignation King should, as would be his inclination, appoint Boun Oum/Phoumi government with consequences outlined reftel para 1.

F) US would undoubtedly be accused of bringing downfall Souvanna government.

Strongly recommend that if plan is to be followed despite risks, it be discussed at once and at high level with Brit and French, to whom it will undoubtedly come, at first at least, as great shock and disappointment.

Our task would be try persuade them to see our view dangers present situation and try get their support. This I cannot do from here. It would be worth waiting day or two here to make this attempt,[4] especially in view stabilization situation Sam Neua (Embtel 554).[5]

Brown

[4] In telegram 321 to Vientiane, September 18, the Department authorized the Embassy to hold up the action requested in telegram 316 to Vientiane pending further consideration in Washington. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1860)

[5] Dated September 18. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

400. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 18, 1960—5:30 p.m.

320. For Ambassador from Parsons.

1. Will be going to UN tomorrow and will be somewhat out of touch with Lao affairs for one week. Would therefore like send you my present thinking.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1760. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Chapman, cleared by Usher, and approved by Parsons.

2. Am a little disturbed by lack of understanding which appears to be developing between us. (Your 549[2] referred only to compelling reasons why we cannot throw our support to Phoumi but not to those equally compelling why we cannot throw our support exclusively to Souvanna. Presume you will be sending fuller reaction to our 316[3] than your 549 which arrived garbled.) Specific issue is our attitude toward Souvanna and Phoumi.

3. While Souvanna is legally constituted authority, we must not forget that direction his policies is inimical to US interests, is contrary to thesis that softness in face of communist pressure is wrong tactic and that in past he has not been identified as friend of US. Therefore although return to stability is primary present objective, we should have no illusions re problems we shall be facing if and when Souvanna gets firmly in saddle. In first place this will be considered US defeat.

4. While Phoumi is "bull-headed", vaultingly ambitious, and relies too exclusively on force, nevertheless he is known as pro-US and anti-communist. Moreover his "Revolution" not just that of single general against legal government, but encompasses great majority southern leadership and evidently has sympathy of King. (Am satisfied that your reading of King's attitudes is correct and not that of Souvanna or Falaize.) It appears to us there is real danger that in last extremity Phoumi will declare separate state of Champassac and that GVN and RTG will recognize this state forthwith. In conclusion we do not believe that Phoumi can be excluded from playing important role within government apparatus, whether as Minister or as General manipulating FAL which is at present key source of power in Laos. Consequently we cannot treat him like a pariah even if he may have deserved it.

5. Above views are strengthened by Embtels [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] of this morning which seem to indicate that Ouane is not in control of Vientiane, that Kong Le has power delay take off of aircraft, and that latter is in close touch with PL to extent that apparently his paras on supply mission to Sam Neua dropped leaflets signed by Phoumi Vongvichit who known communist. Thus General Phoumi's affirmation that Vientiane is controlled by communists may not be so groundless.

6. Am now pretty convinced that political situation cannot be resolved except by proceeding along course of action defined in Deptel 316. Nothing less than a blast will do it. But insofar as military situation concerned, I do think that we must currently insure supply of

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[2] Telegram 549 from Vientiane, September 17, stated that U.S. support for Phoumi would be regarded as interference in Lao internal affairs which the situation in Sam Neua did not yet justify. (*Ibid.;* included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 398.

troops so long as they are effective bastion against PL in field and make this point clear to both Souvanna and Phoumi. We must also recognize that supplying troops through Souvanna does strengthen him and does seriously undercut Phoumi's position. Therefore in any area where local commander is favorable to Phoumi I think it most important supply mission be run through general (except as yesterday in case of overriding combat emergency). In fact Kong Le's capability delay aircraft and use this aircraft by paras to drop PL leaflets raise grave doubts in my mind that Souvanna–Ouane channel can any longer be used satisfactorily to supply troops.

7. Let Steeves have your thoughts on above on No Distribution basis but please repeat your key telegrams to USUN slugged for me.

Herter

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401. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, September 19, 1960.

322. Embtels 554,[2] 555,[3] 556.[4]

1. Your assessment of consequences in various courses of action particularly helpful in arriving at decisions here regarding courses we should follow. Our immediate primary concern continues to be preservation capability and integrity of FAL. Our concurrent concern is restoration of political order and stability.

2. Our posture has been to insure that no troops fighting PL were left unsupported because of Vientiane–Savannakhet stalemate. If troops were supplied and reinforced as necessary from Vientiane, well and good. But if not, then supplies should be channeled through

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1860. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher and Chapman and cleared in draft with Knight of the Department of Defense and with Steeves. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD. The time of transmission is illegible on the source text.

[2] See footnote 5, Document 399.

[3] Document 399.

[4] In telegram 556, September 18, Brown reported that Souvanna had told him of plans to reestablish control of Laos by peaceful means and asked for a clarification of U.S. support for his government to offset the impression that the United States was supporting Phoumi. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

Phoumi. Your recent messages (Embtels 551, 552)[5] and other reports however create grave doubts that we can do so effectively through Vientiane:

a. On his own admission Ouane does not have control of Vientiane.

b. Kong Le retains reality of power as witnessed by his capability hold up supply mission to Sam Neua.

c. Kong Le in touch with PL and even apparently working with them.

d. Nothing to our knowledge has been done to retrieve arms distributed by Kong Le.

e. Vientiane thus appears to be under ultimate control of paras and PL.

3. It therefore appears that situation in Vientiane has not changed in past month despite Souvanna's assurances. It also appears that much of your concern is based on problem of Kong Le and PL reaction to change of government (Embtel 355).[6] Kong Le's removal from Vientiane would of course alter entire picture (note Embtel 493).[7]

4. State and Defense believe essential you carry out action prescribed Deptel 315,[8] unless in particular instance you percieve urgent logistical advantages to supply from Vientiane, in which case you should consult Department. Phoumi should be informed immediately.

Additional considerations are desirability of preventing further fragmentation of FAL most of which appears to be loyal to Phoumi, and of precluding further illegal and damaging distribution of MAP armament to PL sympathizers. It is intended that Chief PEO have maximum flexibility in selecting source of supplies and means of delivery.

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[5] Telegram 551 and 552, both September 18, concern the Lao Government's resupply of Sam Neua. (Both in Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] See footnote 2, Document 377.

[7] In telegram 493, September 8, the Embassy transmitted the terms proposed by Phoumi at Savannakhet for reconciliation with Souvanna Phouma's government. These demands were:

"1. Kong Le return his post; FAL Chief of Staff assume responsibility security Vientiane.

"2. Kong Le recapture weapons distributed civilians.

"3. Kong Le evacuate Pathet Lao from Vientiane.

"4. General Staff Vientiane assure the security that city.

"5. Pathet Lao stop present combat.

"6. (first part garbled) Two camps will not take advantage present situation." (Department of State, Central Files, 751F.00/9–860)

[8] In telegram 315, September 16, the Department suggested that Phoumi and FAL forces under his control be supplied directly by CAT aircraft under U.S. charter. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–1560; included in the microfiche supplement)

5. Another factor which convinces us that Souvanna cannot be supported to exclusion of Phoumi (even aside primary consideration of their political orientation) is that Revolutionary Movement not just that of one general but appears encompass majority southern leadership. Thus country faces danger of split.

6. We are therefore convinced that Souvanna government cannot reunite country or FAL and that a new government must reestablish situation. Even if willing do so (which we are not for reasons given Deptel 316)[9] we doubt even giving full US support could render Souvanna government effective. Furthermore tactics he outlined to you (Embtel 556) would only further split FAL. However we see no indication of move toward new governmental formation (except report of desire of Inpeng, Ou Voravong and Ouane to resign) and therefore believe external impulse must be given.

7. We recognize validity of your statement (Embtel 555) that Souvanna seems to be only figure on scene who has been able restrain Kong Le and provide any reasonable degree of assurance that he and PL will not assume overt control of city. However Souvanna has purchased this influence at great price, i.e., providing opening for PL to infiltrate quietly, preventing return of Phoumi to Vientiane to make Souvanna government work effectively, and bringing about rapid disintegration of entire situation in Laos.

Kong Le problem apparently can only be resolved in one of three ways: a) effective rapprochement between Kong Le and Phoumi; b) sending Kong Le on assignment elsewhere in country; or c) overpowering Kong Le in Vientiane through military action. At moment solution b) would be only one which would give substance to Souvanna's claim of authority in Vientiane.

8. Re restoration of political order, we believe that on basis of foregoing posture re FAL you could logically proceed to take following positions with Souvanna and King:

Following conversations described in your 556 you could explain to Souvanna our position re supplying FAL. Remind him of your frank discussions based upon relationship of mutual trust and of our loyal collaboration with him to bring about peaceful solution. But as stated in past US continues to be deeply disturbed by evidence of Kong Le's power in Vientiane and by extent to which he has either wittingly or unwittingly allowed himself to be used by PL for their own ends. As far as US can see nothing has in fact been done to change this situation and you can cite above facts (para 2) if RLG cannot even assert its authority in Vientiane, it is difficult see how it can extend it to country. Also deeply concerned that country is divided and believe problem more complex than simple question of Phoumi's individual recalci-

[9] Document 398.

trance. It appears that significant elements of population fear with reason that as outgrowth of Kong Le's revolt PL are steadily gaining influence in Vientiane and that majority of southern leadership is setting up what may become separatist state. This is grave danger. We believe therefore it imperative that immediate steps be taken to reconciliate North and South, Vientiane and Savannakhet. We now wonder whether there is any alternative to formation of government so organized that it can command loyalty of essential elements of patriots throughout country.

While US will continue seek maintain integrity of FAL by whatever means, we must warn all those concerned that continuing disintegration of political and military situation and split of Laos into two parts is diametrically opposite to objectives of US aid in Laos and is rapidly creating situation in which our aid can no longer be effective.

You should tell Souvanna that we shall explain our position to Phoumi and King and for this purpose audience requested with King.

9. If feasible you should again send Embassy officer to explain our position re supplying FAL to Phoumi and tell him of your conversations with Souvanna and plans for another audience with King. Repeat our fears re disintegration of country. Separatist movement directly contrary to objectives of US in its efforts to preserve integrity of Kingdom. We believe that only prospect for resolution of situation is for Boun Oum–Phoumi group to negotiate in good faith under aegis of King for formation of new government whose members and policies will command loyalty of patriotic elements. You should also convey to Phoumi in strongest possible terms that attempts to improve his negotiating position by continued acts of violence against Vientiane are unwise. To extent that he is identified with such actions he will build up a strong Western opposition to his interests. Already foreign opinion in Vientiane is becoming embittered toward him.

10. You should repeat our position to King and describe foregoing approaches to Souvanna and to Phoumi. You should emphasize disintegration of situation and real risk of separation of Kingdom.

Dillon

402. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 19, 1960—5 p.m.

562. For Secretary Parsons. For Steeves FE. From Ambassador. Reference: Deptel 320.[2] Greatly appreciate your 320 and personal message of Sept 18 through other channels.[3]

My 549[4] should be read with 548[5] and 554.[6] I was trying get needed supplies Sam Neua, if possible, without getting into political problems. For moment have succeeded, but will act through Phoumi channel for future needs in regions he controls. To clear record, have secured Souvanna's approval such action (Embtel 556).[7] This particularly to protect our position with UN, British, French and Indians, whose criticism, unless forestalled, could harm US interests. Have advised Addis and telling Falaize today.

Leaflets dropped by plane were not signed by Vongvichit. I don't know where that report came from. They were leaflets prepared by Souvanna to explain his govt not Communist (Embtel 531)[8] and were dropped with consent Phoumi regional commander after he had read them. Vongvichit is reported to have sent own message ordering PL cease fighting (Embtel 548, para 8). This part of Souvanna's general plan appeal PL stop fighting. Vongvichit is Souphanouvong's liaison with Vientiane.

I fully agree your views necessity Phoumi role in govt machinery (para 4 your 320) and have been pressing effort get him back in govt in every way possible as you know.

I do not question Phoumi's anti-Communism, his ability, nor his known friendship for the US. I do have doubts about his judgment and to some extent his sincerity, hence his ultimate effectiveness. On the latter point, for example, he refuses help for his troops fighting against PL because it comes from Vientiane. He has not hesitated to take action resulting in division of FAL. Is this putting anti-Communism or personal interest first? On the former, his tactics have consis-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1960. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution; No Distribution Outside Department.

[2] Document 400.

[3] Not found.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 400.

[5] Telegram 548, September 17, requested a 48-hour postponement before providing direct U.S. support to the FAL through Phoumi. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] See footnote 5, Document 399.

[7] See footnote 4, *supra.*

[8] Telegram 531, September 14, summarized these leaflets which were apparently based on a commentary in the *Lao Presse* entitled, "Souvanna Government is not and will never be Communist." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–1460)

tently served to build up rather than reduce the power and influence of Kong Le and consequently of those more hostile to US who are seeking to use him for their own purposes.

I think Souvanna too is anti-Communist and not anti-US. I think he has learned since 1957. I agree that with Souvanna in the saddle we will have lots of problems but I think we would with Phoumi also. I do not think we can say authoritatively now that Souvanna's policies will inevitably lose Laos to Communism, nor that Phoumi's will save Laos from Communism. I think, as you said in your 171,[9] that US will still have enormous influence and it is up to us to use it wisely.

As bearing on my less skeptical attitude towards Souvanna, I think one cause possible misunderstanding is different reading extent significance factors of opinion culminating in Kong Le revolt. I am inclined give this more weight than Washington appears consider justified. I don't like it any more than you do. But I must give you my judgment, for what it is worth, as to what the facts are.

Since events since receipt your 316[10] have not given any further evidence effective Souvanna control, perhaps contrary, and we unwilling, for reasons I respect, to take steps which might enable him obtain it, I am of course prepared carry out wholeheartedly plan proposed 316. This involves perhaps more risks than would immediately appear. Hence my 555,[11] since I want to be sure Washington has all facts as I see them before making major decision.

Machinery is all laid on, however, carry out 316 within deadline set if you so decide.

Thanks again for your messages and exposition your thinking. You may be sure that doubts expressed or arguments advanced before decisions are taken will in no way affect vigor with which instructions will be carried out.

Brown

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[9] Printed as telegram 172 to Bangkok, Document 364.
[10] Document 398.
[11] Document 399.

403. Memorandum of Discussion at the 460th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, September 21, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and discussion of subjects unrelated to Laos. The discussion on Laos was part of the item "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security."]

Mr. Dulles observed that the situation in Laos was still confusing and that little progress had been made toward the settlement of the crisis during the past week. The threatening situation in Sam Neua Province, however, had been quieted as a result of the dispatch of Laotian parachute troops to that area. The situation remains troublesome because Pathet Lao and Viet Minh forces could intervene at any time. The problem of the conflicting governments in Laos is no nearer a settlement. The King has requested that General Ouane and General Phoumi call upon him. A skirmish between Phoumi's forces and Vientiane forces has been reported at Pak Sane,[2] but little bloodshed resulted. Apparently, Phoumi has adopted tactics of carrying on a war of nerves against Vientiane. There has been firing across the Mekong River into the city and Phoumi apparently intends to starve out the government. Meanwhile, Sarit is bringing strong pressure against the U.S. to support Phoumi, who is of course strongly anti-Communist but is unlikely to become reconciled with Souvanna Phouma. The King hesitates to take strong action in this situation for fear of losing his crown.

Secretary Dillon said the situation was so confused that we could not continue to let it drift. He believed we must take strong action in the direction of securing a unified government in Laos which would include Phoumi and eliminate Kong Le. Action toward such a government could only be taken by the King. Yesterday our Ambassador in Laos told Souvanna Phouma that we believed his government was inadequate, that the time had come for a national union government which would get rid of Kong Le, and that we wished to consult the King.[3] Souvanna Phouma took this démarche reasonably well and

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs on September 21.

[2] During the night of September 21–22, Phoumi's and Kong Le's troops fought a major engagement 90 miles east of Vientiane. Phoumi's forces had captured Paksane just a month earlier, but despite their superior numbers, the Phoumists scattered and withdrew after putting up little resistance against Kong Le's troops. ([*document number not declassified*], September 22; Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

[3] Reported in telegram 579 from Vientiane, September 21. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2160; included in the microfiche supplement)

arranged for Ambassador Brown to see the King today.[4] At the same time we have advised Phoumi that an attack on Vientiane would not be productive and should not be undertaken. We have also authorized a reinforcement of Sam Neua by giving Phoumi equipment and supplies. Mr. Dulles said the problem was to find a single leader who could work out the situation with Phoumi and establish a unified government. Secretary Dillon agreed but added he did not know whether Prince Boun Oum was such a man.

[Here follows discussion of South Vietnam (see volume I, pages 585–586) and topics unrelated to Laos.]

Marion W. Boggs

[4] See telegram 593, *infra*.

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404. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 22, 1960—9 p.m.

593. Pass USUN. USUN for Parsons. Manila for MLG. Addressees pass interested agencies. Reference Deptels 316, 322, 323.[2] Made presentation as instructed reference telegrams. Found King in more decisive confident mood. Also appeared better informed military situation than on September 13.

King feels first task is re-establishment integrity and unity FAL. For this purpose invited all military commanders meet with him LP. Had received tel Boun Oum stating he agreed meeting desirable but should occur Savannakhet. Souvanna agreed come with his officers LP. King annoyed Boun Oum intervention since his plan to have purely military meeting without politicians present. Does not want Souvanna at this first meeting either. King hopes find consensus among officers [for] necessity anti-Communist policy and strong de-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2260. Secret; Niact. Repeated for information to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Manila, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Telegrams 316 and 322 are printed as Documents 398 and 401, respectively. In telegram 323, September 20, the Department stated that the proposed démarches from the King to the dissident Generals would give impetus to proposed negotiations, although a political reconciliation would probably have to precede an agreement on security. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2060; included in the microfiche supplement)

fense against PL. Also hopes by personal contacts during visit re-establish some sense harmony among officers. If this accomplished, King intends call meeting Committee National Defense with Souvanna and Boun Oum present.

Political solution will be sought there, probably new government, major reshuffle present government membership and policies. Asked who might head new government, King said reflectively, "would really like keep Souvanna, prove is man of good will but he must change policies, have Phoumi C-in-C and remove extreme leftist members. All right be neutral but must be anti-Communist." King agreed must reach and announce solution before resignation Souvanna government to avoid new coup Vientiane and PL outbreaks throughout country. States willing return Vientiane with new government. (Saw Kou Abhay after audience and made these points to him. He agreed.)

Throughout talk King kept repeating theme necessity strong anti-Communist posture and vigorous use force against PL.

King sent telegram Boun Oum and Souvanna this morning stating purpose his suggested meeting military forces LP was reunite FAL as primary bulwark country against current attacks and difficulties. This reason why he invited soldiers. Feels meeting should be LP in his presence. Rather eloquent message ends, "His Majesty insists that meeting occur LP as soon as possible." King says not sure this will succeed, nevertheless feels course outlined above best hope for solution.

Hollis and Fromer did not go Savannakhet today since Boun Oum, Phoumi in Bangkok. Leaving early tomorrow morning.

Told King of my démarche Souvanna and proposed démarche Ouane and Phoumi.

Details follows.[3]

Brown

[3] In telegram 595 from Vientiane, September 23. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2360)

405. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, September 23, 1960—9 p.m.

597. Addressees pass interested agencies. Reftels 315, 316, 322, 323, Embtel 595.[2] Emboffs had 50-minute meeting Sept 23 morning with Boun Oum and Phoumi. USG presentation closely along lines reftels closing with statement U.S. would consider refusal go Luang Prabang or extreme solution such as separate state as "very grave step". (Fromer translated from prepared text.)

Phoumi, who did most talking, said U.S. "badly misunderstood" Savannakhet position. No separatist, they respected and faithful to King but felt he should either (1) take decision, (2) assume head government himself, (3) appoint strong leader. Military solution unnecessary because FAL not divided. There was only political split, between Communists and non-Communists. Vientiane already Communist "up to the neck". Pulling out marked maps, Phoumi indicated Souphanouvong home Vientiane claiming it as PL headquarters with Phoumi Vongvichit and Nouhak Phoumsavan present, and five BNs PL in areas contiguous Vientiane, including two Paksane. Quinim Pholsena now real power Vientiane. Even Kong Le in eclipse by Red takeover and Luang Prabang already partially subverted. Therefore, his reaction King's invitation negative, for two reasons: (1) meeting would be useless, and (2) LP not safe. Ensuing discussion indicated he amenable Plaine des Jarres, Pakse, Seno Base or Nogkhai (Thailand). Phoumi said security Savannakhet group important since if trapped in LP or elsewhere, would mean end anti-Communist fight in Laos.

Boun Oum's only contribution was to state he refused talk with Souvanna or Souphanouvong.

Also present Leuam, Thong and General Bounleut. Leuam said Souvanna government grew out of coup d'etat and force, therefore not legal.

Comment: While Phoumi insisted his position clear, Emboffs (and [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] PEO Pres also present) left meeting with feeling final negative decision on meeting may possibly not yet have been taken. Savannakhet group sought argue merits their case, but Emboffs stuck to repetition theme situation bad, U.S. Govt concerned, very important everyone join King in trying solve impasse, which only helping PL while FAL disintegrates and effectiveness U.S.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2360. Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Phnom Penh, and Saigon. Received at 3:03 p.m.

[2] See footnote 8, Document 401; Document 398; Document 401; footnote 2, *supra;* and footnote 3, *supra,* respectively.

aid increasingly questionable. (Phoumi asked text presentation which refused, but copy left U.S. representatives Savannakhet for additional talking purposes. Text by pouch.) Also noticeable increasing tendency Phoumi regard everyone who not with him as wholly Communist. Only Phoumi reaction Emboffs' statement could not condone siege and sabotage Vientiane was to state he had warned civilians and foreign Embassies leave city.

Brown

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406. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom[1]

Washington, September 23, 1960—3:56 p.m.

1925. For Ambassadors from Dillon. USUN for Merchant and Parsons. [*1½ lines of source text not declassified*] of meeting 22 September between Prime Minister Sarit, General Phoumi and Prince Boun Oum. With reference this report following telegram being sent Ambassador Bangkok for action, repeated for your info:

"[*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] report in question presents us with situation of utmost gravity. If Phoumi follows a course of action as therein outlined much of that which we have been endeavoring to achieve over the years in Laos and more particularly in the past few weeks will be effectively sabotaged.

Brown's démarche to the King is viewed here as encouraging. If Phoumi and others concerned will cooperate in King's efforts to bring about reconciliation between Lao patriots we may have something constructive to work with. If Phoumi snubs this royal gesture and engages in a program of secession and open revolt world opinion will be turned against him.

Phoumi's exhibited recalcitrance will undoubtedly encourage our enemies in the UN to introduce the matter there. If this takes place in spite of everything that we can do to thwart it the accusing finger will undoubtedly be pointed at Thailand and Marshal Sarit personally. If Laos becomes an issue in the UN on these terms there is little doubt that it will split SEATO down the middle. Current misgivings of the British, French and even Australians and New Zealanders of Phoumi's intentions may very well line up with those who would condemn him.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2360. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Steeves and cleared with Cumming and with Dillon in substance. Repeated niact to Paris, Canberra, Wellington, and USUN.

In view of the gravity of this situation would urge you to approach Sarit immediately bringing home to him the adverse effects which would ensure [*ensue*] from Phoumi's rash action not only to our purposes in Laos but almost of more importance the serious consequences to Thailand."

Foregoing text also being sent Ambassador Saigon with instruction transmit essence immediately to Diem as he deems appropriate.

[*1 paragraph (1½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

Dillon

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407. Editorial Note

On September 23, while attending the U.N. General Assembly's 15th regular session, Secretary of State Herter, British Foreign Secretary Lord Home, and French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville met to discuss Laos. An account of their meeting is in a memorandum of conversation, September 23. (Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Miscellaneous Material; included in the microfiche supplement)

The basis for the discussions were recommendations of a tripartite Under Secretaries' working group, composed of Livingston Merchant and J. Graham Parsons for the United States, Charles Lucet for France, and Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar for the United Kingdom. The Under Secretaries' working group recommended a series of "common objectives" in Laos: preventing the collapse of the country from internal or external aggression; preventing strife between non-Communist elements; preserving Laos' territorial unity and the nation; and conserving Laos' ability to resist Communism both from within and from the outside so that it would remain "neutral but friendly to the West." As a means of achieving these objectives, the Under Secretaries suggested independent but parallel action which included close consultation among the three nations' diplomatic representatives in Vientiane and Bangkok, the use of Hammarskjöld's informal influence to maintain Lao unity, and an effort to make known the three nations' concern for Lao unity and respect for constitutional procedures. The working group also concluded that it would be a mistake for the U.N. Security Council to seize upon what was a Lao internal matter.

The Under Secretaries also discussed the subsidiary problem of the Thai blockade of the Lao border, in effect since early August, which had resulted in a critical shortage of petroleum in Laos. The working group recommended that the three nations' representatives in

Bangkok try to convince the Thai Government that such a petroleum shortage only benefited the Communist cause. The three Foreign Ministers accepted these recommendations with minimal discussion.

Accounts of the meetings of the Under Secretaries' working group are in Secto 5, 9, and 10, September 22, 24, and 24, respectively. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2260, 751J.00/9–2460, and 751J.00/9–2460, respectively; all included in the microfiche supplement)

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408. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, September 25, 1960—6 p.m.

537. USUN for Parsons. Embtel 535 to Department, 28 to Parsons.[2] [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] been informed by Sarit that reply was received early this morning from Phoumi to effect that Phoumi willing to attend meeting in Luang Prabang but is still genuinely concerned about safety and what he feels were "tricks" on him last time. Officers around Phoumi also urging him strongly to go. However Phoumi does not want any large bodyguard at Luang Prabang as this would "insult King and be humiliating to Luang Prabang military command". Phoumi also pointed out King had not yet set date for meeting. Phoumi also said that if he went he wanted "same arrangements as when Souvanna Phouma made trip to Savannakhet." Clear by this Phoumi has in mind travel by US Attaché plane and does not object to presence of Zellweger.

Sarit has sent reply this afternoon that Phoumi "must" go Luang Prabang as his present position impossible because (1) Phoumi cannot fight Commies alone, (2) he must have Thai and US support; (3) Thailand cannot and will not support him under present circumstances, et cetera. "If you lose this chance you lose everything."

Sarit is advising Phoumi take with him Bounleut, Colonel Sourith and "Boun Oum if he wants to go".

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2560. Secret; Niact; Limited Distribution. Also sent to Vientiane and USUN and repeated to Saigon, Paris, London, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In this telegram, September 24, Johnson reported that Sarit informed him that he had sent a message to Phoumi "strongly urging" that he attend the meeting at Luang Prabang. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/9–2460; included in the microfiche supplement)

Thais have stated would appreciate any assistance Embassy Vientiane can give in having King issue another invitation to Phoumi establishing definite date for meeting and some assurances on Laos side on personal security. Assume Embassy Vientiane Attaché plane would be available for trip but if assistance required CAT planes are available here.

Must emphasize this has been sold here to Sarit and Sarit has sold to Phoumi on basis that Luang Prabang meeting is to be at both military and political level to settle composition new government accordance US proposals. Trust Embassy Vientiane will immediately take whatever action necessary clarify with King and Souvanna.

Johnson

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409. Editorial Note

The Commander in Chief, Pacific, Admiral Herbert Riley, and his Assistant Political Adviser, Thomas Corcoran, visited Vientiane September 24–26. They held discussions with the members of the Country Team and with all the political officers in the Embassy. Riley's account of the visit is in CINCPAC telegram 5849 to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 29. (Department of State, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1960, Part I) Corcoran wrote his own impressions of the trip in a memorandum to Sterling Cottrell, CINCPAC POLAD, September 30. (Washington National Records Center, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170, 092 Asia) Cottrell sent a letter to Parsons on October 1 explaining his view of the visit and providing Parsons a copy of Corcoran's memorandum. (Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Pol Affairs, 10/60 Laos)

All these documents are included in the microfiche supplement.

410. Memorandum of Discussion at the 461st Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, September 29, 1960[1]

[Here follows a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting.]

1. Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security

Mr. Dulles said the top military commanders in Laos held a meeting yesterday at Luang Prabang. A great deal of pressure was required to induce General Phoumi to attend this meeting. General Phoumi was probably influenced in agreeing to attend by the serious military reverse which his forces suffered at Paksane, where Kong Le's paratroops turned back the Phoumi forces, and by critical developments at Sam Neua. After a brief meeting, General Ouane and General Phoumi apparently agreed on a cease-fire and on a high level political conference to be held within five days for the purpose of re-organizing the Laotian cabinet, a re-organization which may involve Souvanna Phouma. Prince Boun Oum was also able to talk with the King without any other political figures present. The Prince claims that during this conversation the King indicated he would remove Souvanna Phouma from office. Mr. Dulles was unable to estimate the accuracy of this report by Prince Boun Oum. Meanwhile, Pathet Lao forces appear to be moving in Sam Neua Province. It was difficult to tell to what extent the Pathet Lao is being assisted by the Viet Minh but Mr. Dulles believed that at least logistic support from the Viet Minh has been received by the Pathet Lao at Sam Neua. Mr. Dulles reported that the loss of Sam Neua would be critical because the only air strip in the area is in Sam Neua. Consequently, it would be difficult to reinforce anti-Communist forces in the provinces. It was not yet known what happened to the three battalions of Phoumi forces at Sam Neua. In all probability they retreated since there has been no claim that they were captured. Mr. Dulles thought the Pathet Lao would probably hold Sam Neua as a bargaining position against the new Government of Laos if one is formed. The principal issue now between Phoumi and Souvanna Phouma is whether to negotiate with the Pathet Lao. Mr. Dulles believed we must now expect a few days without much news while preparations for the high level political conference are carried forward. Mr. Dulles believed the situation would probably force the Phoumi and Souvanna Phouma elements to come together. In the absence of the unification of these two elements, the danger of the loss of Laos to Communism was great.

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs on September 29.

Secretary Dillon said it had now been admitted that some three companies of Pathet Lao troops had joined with the Vientiane troops in defeating Phoumi at Paksane. As a result of the Sam Neua situation and requests for our assistance, we had authorized the resupply of various strongpoints between Luang Prabang and Sam Neua, including Xieng Khouang, with ammunition, CAT airplanes, food, and so on. Mr. Dillon said the U.S. was more directly involved in the Laotian situation than it had been in the past.

In response to a question from Mr. Dulles, General Twining said he had nothing to add. Secretary Gates inquired about a report that the Souvanna Phouma government had taken steps to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. Mr. Dulles said it had been reported that Souvanna Phouma would ask the Soviet representative in Cambodia also to serve as the Soviet representative in Laos. Secretary Dillon believed this report was not yet confirmed. We had made strong representations to Souvanna Phouma urging him not to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR and also advising him against initiating talks with the Pathet Lao.

[Here follow discussion of subjects unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Marion W. Boggs

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411. Memorandum for the Record by the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant)[1]

Washington, September 30, 1960.

I briefly described to the Secretary the discussion of Laos with the Joint Chiefs and Tom Gates this morning.[2] I told him that it was the general consensus, which I share, that we were approaching the need to make a decision to give all-out material and financial support to Phoumi and those who would stand with him to try to hold the southern half of Laos. I pointed out this meant the abandonment of our policy hitherto and would greatly heighten the risk of communist intervention in the north from outside forces.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–3060. Secret.

[2] A more detailed account of this meeting, which began at 11 a.m., is in Department of State, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 70 D 328; it is included in the microfiche supplement.

I informed the Secretary that there had been general agreement that Ambassador Brown should make one further approach to the King in an effort to persuade him personally to take over the leadership of the Kingdom and rally to him all non- and anti-communist forces. The Secretary indicated his approval.

Finally, I told the Secretary that we were giving some thought to a suggestion considered at the meeting with the Joint Chiefs to sending out John Steeves or some other high-ranking emissary together with a representative of the Joint Chiefs to survey the situation on the ground with the Ambassador. These emissaries would be given considerable advance authority to commit or withhold U.S. support as seemed necessary. The Secretary indicated some doubts concerning this move, and we should not set it in train without consulting further with him.

LTM

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412. Telegram From the Department of State to the Ambassador in Laos[1]

Washington, October 1, 1960—4:55 p.m.

365. Eyes only Ambassador. Exclusive for CINCPAC and POLAD. At high level meeting 30th between Department representatives and Joint Chiefs, a comprehensive review of Laos situation took place.[2] On basis your most recent reports and intelligence amply clear state of crisis nearer and if Laos or a portion of it is to be salvaged from Communist control, further decisive action required.

You are instructed to seek immediate audience with the King pointing out to him that political and military leadership now in such stage of disintegration that the only solution for salvaging his country is for King to take authority into his own hands and appoint what would be equivalent of caretaker government under royal decree. He would himself assume leadership of government or at least name a Prime Minister other than Souvanna Phouma who from all indications is either unable, unwilling or (more seriously) actively conniving with the Communists to gradually hand over Laos. Secondly, the King

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–160. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Steeves and Chapman and cleared with SEA, with the Department of Defense and Secretary Herter in substance, and with Merchant in draft. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, London, Paris, Canberra, and CINCPAC.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

would name a Commander-in-Chief of his forces in whom he has the most confidence and whom he feels best able to rally remnants of FAL now bitterly divided between several loyalties.

King should set forth his action in radio appeal to the country and use any other information media which could be provided to disseminate this royal decree and ask for support for those he has named to support him in this hour of crisis.

You should point out to the King that our aid to the armed forces is now not only ineffectual but in real danger of supporting dangerous elements like Kong Le who from all appearances would seem to be in active support of Pathet Lao and even soliciting outside Communist aid. Continuation our pay to the FAL and other type of aid is therefore contingent upon his assumption of this authority in setting up channels through which we can funnel assistance to those who would support the royal purpose.

You should assure him that if he willing to take this decisive step, the United States is willing to give him all feasible support in order to reestablish integrity of his realm. As part of his action King's presence in Vientiane at seat of Government would in our opinion be a good symbolic move and make a more efficient administration possible.

In connection with the above the Department of course bears in mind that the second stage of the operation the King is already attempting to execute is a political solution following the meeting two days ago of the military leaders.[3] This would merely be a hastening of that act. Therefore, the political meeting already scheduled may be the vehicle by which he can carry out the very purposes we have outlined above. In order to lend urgency and seriousness to our approach to the King he should be told that no further payment of troops or other forms of aid are to be forthcoming until this political step has been taken. This includes the release requested in your 635.[4]

In revealing appropriate portions of your instructions to Souvanna when requesting immediate audience you should inform him that uncertainty regarding situation at Sam Neua, continued assault by

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[3] The meeting took place on September 28 at Luang Prabang. According to telegram 646, September 29, the Lao military leaders (excluding Kong Le who was not at the meeting) agreed to remain under their respective commands of Savannakhet and Vientiane, to fight together against the Pathet Lao, and to respect a cease-fire among themselves. They did raise the possibility of Boun Oum as Prime Minister with Souvanna as his deputy. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2960; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In telegram 635, September 28, the Embassy requested authorization for the release of 58 million kip for the FAL, 20 million for civilian budget support, and 12 million for police services. The Embassy stated that it would release this money, if authorized, only after certain assurances were received from the Souvanna government, such as a prohibition of a pay raise for the FAL without consultation with the United States and a promise that the Royal Lao Government would make these funds available throughout all Lao provinces. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/9–2860)

Kong Le's forces against FAL units south of Nam Ca Dinh, and what we regard as probability that PL forces are playing significant role in both these situations, clearly reveal disintegration non-Communist elements still in progress and PL gaining stronger position in Laos as each day passes. US cannot be party to take-over of Laos by Communists and we cannot support or condone any government of Laos which is instrumental in such process. Unless cease-fire agreed upon by military leaders Luang Prabang becomes effective immediately and unless contemplated meeting in Luang Prabang to settle political issues can be held forthwith to reunite country under single government, US will have to review its position and determine some new approach to problem of helping preserve Lao independence.

You might then review our efforts bring about peaceful national reconciliation since August 9. Remind him of our cooperation with him in trying re-establish stability of regime; of our encouragement to Phoumi to serve in his government; of our exertions prevent attacks on Vientiane; and of our seeking RTG cooperation in lifting blockade. In light present situation question is posed: Are the Lao willing and able to preserve independence their country? We can understand desire of Lao to stop killing each other, but it seems to us this desire should apply with special force against FAL killing FAL. For us to effect releases now would amount to financing both sides of civil war. Under these circumstances US has decided withhold all releases until situation is clearer.

FYI: Believe you should know that there is strong and growing sentiment here to give exclusive and all-out support to those able and willing to salvage at least that portion of the country centered in Savannakhet if the King unwilling or unable to take such leadership suggested above. FYI. [5]

British, French and Australians informed substance foregoing except FYI portion.

Herter

[5] In telegram 591 from Bangkok, October 2, Johnson reported his impression that Phoumi and his forces at Savannakhet were so demoralized by Kong Le's recent military victory that U.S. policy in Laos should not be based on exclusive support of Phoumi without first making a careful assessment of the situation. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–2660; included in the microfiche supplement)

413. Editorial Note

On October 1, at an airport interview with the press in Saigon, General Williston B. Palmer, Director of Military Assistance, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, announced that the United States had suspended aid to Laos. The following paraphrase of Palmer's statement as reported in telegram 731 from Saigon, October 2, is based upon what the Embassy in Saigon described as a "somewhat unclear tape:"

"Military assistance Laos suspended because 'situation unclear, and until there is a stabilization I might say it is very difficult send anything anywhere and know what is going to happen to it.' US has stopped making deliveries for time being (because) 'we have not been sure who was responsible for anything.' Might be resumed, even could be. (New) decision must be made to start something once suspended." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/10–260)

In telegram 368 to Vientiane, the Department informed Brown that Palmer's statement to the press was "much broader and more categorical than the position we had visualized you taking with the King." The idea of informing the King that no further troop payments or other aid would be made was to pressure him and Lao politicians immediately to form a government. At the time Palmer made his statement, the Department noted that aid to Laos had not yet been suspended. The Department anticipated that when the King convened a meeting of Lao political leaders who took a position promising decisive action, normal U.S. aid releases could be resumed. In any event, the United States was still prepared to fund Lao troops "ready and willing to fight" the Pathet Lao, including Phoumi's forces at Savannakhet. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–260; included in the microfiche supplement)

414. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 2, 1960—8 p.m.

660. Addressees pass interested agencies. Following is summary appraisal current situation Laos as I and members of CT see it as of October 2:

1. Crying need of country is still unity.

2. On military side some slight progress has been made within limitations still divided command. Military leaders left LP[2] in reasonably cordial atmosphere. Cease-fire agreed. Vientiane forces withdrawing north of Nam Cadinh. Sabotage ended Vientiane. Agreed supplies Sam Neua to be provided best available source. Anti-Communist attitude Army leaders reaffirmed. Jointly agreed send Amkha Plaine des Jarres ascertain facts military situation second region. Bounleuth also Plaine des Jarres to confer Amkha.

3. This still highly fragile structure under which mutual confidence only slowly beginning be restored. Desperately needs political underpinning. It is still very vulnerable shocks from political moves by Souvanna or Phoumi such as Souvanna's proposed dismissal Phoumi and others from Army, gestures too great softness [toward?] PL, or by irresponsible action by Kong Le or saboteurs and paras not yet contacted by respective headquarters. We should encourage this unity in every possible way.

4. Political solution less hopeful. King appears no hurry call political meeting. Souvanna appears encouraged he can gain support country and undermine Phoumi's support, and is trying do so. There has been substantial shift support from Savannakhet to Vientiane in second military region. This acknowledged tacitly even by Phoumi. Psychological effect Vientiane success Paksane (even though perhaps normal reaction less trained troops when faced by elite) has helped Souvanna.

5. Souvanna consciously tried persuade defenders Sam Neua come over to him, which certainly, whether intended or not, disrupted effectiveness defense city. Cease-fire orders by PL in regions loyal Souvanna, and scattered reports PL turning themselves in with arms, have undoubtedly helped him by lending credence claims his policies will restore peace in country. Results have made Souvanna less inclined compromise, especially when added his general self-confidence and sense he supported by legal and constitutional propriety.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–260. Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, London, and Paris.

[2] See footnote 3, Document 412.

6. Separatist tendencies in Savannakhet camp still evident despite Phoumi–Boun Oum assertions they will not divide country, e.g. Boun Oum refusal allow students from south to come Vientiane for examinations, separate arrangements with airlines, command army divide north and south regions.

7. PL position considerably strengthened since coup, largely as result their pivotal position when FAL and RLG divided. They have additional weapons, have made territorial gains Sam Neua Province and are able gain stature by support legal government whose policies they exploiting. They have played clever game of not appreciably intervening in Vientiane–Savannakhet conflict but remaining in wings, apparently with Vientiane approval, as menacing presence giving psychological and potential physical support anti-Phoumi forces. This intermittent liaison will inevitably continue so long as RLG and FAL divided and Kong Le feels he or coup ideals threatened. PL have also helped increase Souvanna influence in country by ceasing fire where his forces involved but continuing fight with Phoumi forces, thus giving tangible evidence to people correctness Souvanna claim he and not Phoumi can restore internal peace in country and encouraging him continue as Prime Minister. Division in country has also given PL greater freedom movement and propaganda and they have undoubtedly exploited this to seek further popular support.

8. Clear some kind negotiations with PL inevitable whatever composition government. Phoumi even reported via Colonel Houmphan as late as October 1 suggesting Souphanouvong be invited by King join political discussions.

9. Kong Le still in position strength. He has popular influence as result coup and appeal its objectives peace, neutrality and anti-corruption. He is commander military unit which still best trained, best led, best supported and most effective in FAL. Success his units Paksane enhanced his reputation. His influence with crowds undoubtedly still considerable. There is evidence Kong Le in direct liaison with PL. In addition sharing basic Souvanna position preferability peaceful settlement PL problem, Kong Le more naively prepared accept parallel action with PL, and where he feels necessary, even their assistance, especially when Savannakhet forces involved. Danger here is while he may think he using PL, they using him. Souvanna still finds him useful and vice-versa. His public announcements, however, should not be taken too seriously since he tends speak without thinking and has backed down from them on every major occasion when Souvanna has chosen to make an issue with him. Harm he does is in his cooperation PL, help of his units for leftist elements Vientiane, and in interference smaller things which Ouan and Souvanna do not know about, but cumulative effect of which has given Kong Le considerable influence and prestige.

Recommended action.

1. US should in every possible way seek achieve and support reunification FAL. We can do this by offering full support in form pay, food, airlift, munitions, Lopburi paras and other necessities provided requests made united basis. We should promptly honor agreed requests and keep up pressure on politicians; e.g., my démarche yesterday Souvanna re his proposed dismissal Phoumi. (Embtel 658)[4]

2. US should continue press viewpoint that essential government be strengthened by addition tougher anti-Communists from Phoumi camp or elsewhere no matter who Prime Minister every possible way on King, on Souvanna, on Phoumi and on others who can be helpful, e.g., Somsanith, Kou Abhay. Competent Minister Defense (e.g. Somsanith with Bounleut as State Secretary for Defense or Deputy C-in-C) with no other responsibilities essential.

3. We are considering with a few responsible Lao who might be best composition government and how deal with Kong Le.

4. It would be preferable for Souvanna be retained in new government because he represents wide elements which cannot be ignored and which no one else can equally effectively represent.

5. In applying our pressures we should endeavor get agreed political solution completed before resignation or reorganization Souvanna government in order forestall possible new coup d'etat in Vientiane and outbreaks PL throughout country. We should endeavor persuade King return Vientiane with new government so as give it maximum support. If, however, trouble breaks out Vientiane and this not feasible, we should be prepared support new government at LP.

6. I should keep closest touch with Souvanna or any new Prime Minister and constantly remind him risks any negotiations with Pathet Lao (vice them), even from position maximum unity and strength anti-Communist elements in country.

Brown

[4] In telegram 658, October 1, Brown reported a long conversation he had with Souvanna concerning the Lao political and military situation. Brown warned Souvanna that his proposed dismissal of Phoumi, Bounleuth, and 25 other dissident Army officers would be misinterpreted to mean that Kong Le, who had told the press he was actively seeking such action, exercised great influence in the Souvanna government. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–160; included in the microfiche supplement)

415. Telegram From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt)[1]

Washington, October 3, 1960—5:21 p.m.

JCS DA 983752. 1. In view [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] report renewed attack by Kong Le–PL Forces against Phoumi troops,[2] urgent objective is to prevent another defeat which could complete demoralization of that portion FAL loyal to Phoumi. If you agree you are authorized immediately to (a) provide necessary arms and supplies (b) move Lobpuri contingent to location you think best (c) air-lift other Phoumi Forces as you consider desirable.

2. In addition to above, and if you concur, desire Chief, PEO make strongest possible approach to Ouan and to Phoumi to forego individual differences and to make joint effort to preserve FAL and Kingdom of Laos. Ouan and Phoumi should be informed of action by U.S. in Paragraph 1 above and in Deptel 365 to Vientiane.[3] Believed here that this approach can be supplementary effort to appeal to King by Ambassador and that self-interest of both Ouan and Phoumi may lead them to accept such action if assured of full U.S. support. If possible, Ouan and Phoumi should be impressed with necessity of cooperation despite other political pressures on them on grounds that continuation of present situation paves way to disintegration of Kingdom and its eventual subservience to communists.

3. State and Defense concur.

[1] Source: U.S. Army Military History Institute, Department of Army Communications Center Files. Secret; Immediate. Repeated to Chief PEO, Laos, and Chief JUSMAG, Bangkok.

[2] Not further identified.

[3] Document 412.

416. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 5, 1960—7 p.m.

680. Eyes only for Under Secretary Merchant and Assistant Secretary Parsons from Ambassador. I have thought long and hard over

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–560. Top Secret; Niact; No Distribution.

Deptel 365[2] and JCS message 983752 Oct 3[3] in which State has concurred. I am, of course, following my instructions 365 and as you know, have asked further instructions re execution JCS message (Embtel 671).[4]

Following are my views:

1) Events have moved so far and so fast here that there is now little or no chance salvage country, or even south alone, through Phoumi. Support of him in absence agreement between him and Souvanna will lead to further disintegration and to accomplish anything will probably have to be so extensive as to constitute clear outside intervention and so involve serious risk actual war.

2) We must therefore, before embarking on this course, make a conscious decision whether such risk is something we prepared contemplate.

3) In my view we have now to cut our losses, which are already serious. Alternative to chaos or division is to make best of Souvanna, who is himself worried about rapidly increasing strength PL and wants all support he can get to strengthen his hand against them. We should gain Phoumi cooperation if possible, but if this fails, and unless King pulls some Lao rabbit out of his hat as result my démarche tomorrow, Souvanna is only rallying point left in country.

4) Action contemplated para 1 JCS message, if pursued to extent probably necessary be effective, will be regarded as clear declaration support for Phoumi against lawful govt (constitutional point is important), confirming suspicions long harbored that US has been secretly supporting him.

5) It will be considered intervention internal affairs another country, which against our stated policy and which we have most recently criticized when USSR gave direct support Lumumba.

6) It risks precipitating civil war and intervention from north with consequence risk international war. It will certainly arouse PL to further propaganda and other activities, and probably result in action breach already tenuous cease-fire by Vientiane forces.

7) It will surely diminish, if not eliminate, our still considerable influence with Souvanna govt and other non-Phoumi forces in country. The US position in Vientiane would, of course, be most difficult, as it would [be] hard for us to remain persona grata with legal govt if we were known to be supporting those whom it considers to be rebels against it.

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[2] Document 412.

[3] *Supra.*

[4] In telegram 671, October 4, Brown requested that, while PEO was preparing to support Phoumi's forces, he be authorized to refrain from indications of such support until he saw King Savang on October 6. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–460; included in the microfiche supplement)

8) Perhaps most serious of all, it would be placing us behind a decreasing force (see for example Bangkok's 591[5] and 601[6]) with declining will to fight which in my opinion cannot succeed reunite country or even south, but, if by some miracle it did, would do so only precariously by force and invite consequences correctly set forth para 1 Deptel 316.[7]

9) I think there is still a chance that a Souvanna govt, given our support and guidance, can avoid Communist control of Laos. I do not believe that Souvanna is working to hand over Laos to Communism, as suggested Deptel 365. (See also Deptel 175)[8] I feel that unless King takes some effective action as result my démarche tomorrow to bring about a wholly new govt or to bring Souvanna and Phoumi into some sort of effective cooperation, there will be no other alternative to Souvanna which offers hope of salvaging anything we care about from the present wreck. We must always remember Lao inherent reluctance to fight. This would be particularly true if King responds affirmatively to plea for support which Souvanna apparently plans make to him tomorrow. (Embtel 678)[9]

10) I would hope therefore that we could start taking an earnest look at what we could salvage from Souvanna.

11) I do not wish to bind anyone else here by this message. It is sent on my sole responsibility. I have however shown it to [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] and ARMA who have authorized me state they concur. I know also that Director USOM is in full agreement with views expressed. I believe ARMA has quite independently sent a message to his superiors in Washington which you may wish see. He has not shown it to me, nor have I asked to see it.

Brown

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[5] See footnote 5, Document 412.

[6] In telegram 601, October 4, the Embassy in Bangkok transmitted an extremely negative appraisal of the Lao situation by SEATO Secretary General Pote Sarasin. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–460; included in the microfiche supplement)

[7] Document 398.

[8] Document 367.

[9] Telegram 678, October 5, reported that Souvanna felt it imperative to start negotiations with the Pathet Lao before their strength increased. He asked for U.S. support, "pointing out how lack of it weakened him in these negotiations." Souvanna was going to see the King on October 6 to ask him to order Phoumi and Boun Oum to forget their differences. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–560)

417. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 5, 1960—11 p.m.

681. Pass JCS. Eyes only Ambassadors. Re JCS 983752 DTG 0322Z1Z.[2]

1. Following is CT opinion on the question of whether we can expect that the provision of additional matériel to Phoumi forces at this time will ensure that such forces:

A. Can avoid further defeats by Kong Le forces with or without PL assistance or

B. Can successfully resist the Pathet Lao in Regions 3 and 4.

2. There are some generalizations that apply to Phoumi's forces in either of the above situations:

A. They have recently suffered both military and psychological defeats and have lost confidence in themselves and, probably, in their leader.

B. They suffer from the psychological disadvantages of:

(1) Not belonging to the forces of the legal government and are operating outside the government.

(2) They have been given no clear objective or sense of mission other than to support Phoumi and thereby fight Communism, which many of them may suspect is for his own personal aims.

(3) They are strongly tempted by the appeal of neutrality and negotiations as opposed to fighting the Pathet Lao.

3. Given these initial disadvantages it seems unlikely that the mere provision of matériel will have any substantial effect upon the ability of Phoumi's forces to successfully defend themselves against Kong Le and/or PL in the immediate future. A sense of purpose and executive leadership must be given. Given a reasonable period of time for reconstituting and redeployment of these forces, and if their initial combat operations after said reconstitution are successful, thereby restoring confidence in themselves and their officers, it is likely that Phoumi's forces would be successful against the Kong Le–PL forces.

4. One unit, the 1st Para BN, may not be suffering under the same handicaps as the remainder of Phoumi forces. It is believed to be better trained, better officered, and a segment of approx 200 men have been removed from the events of Laos during the past several weeks. The willingness of the 1st Paras to fight against their fellow 2nd Paras with

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–560. Top Secret; Niact; Eyes Only. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 415.

whom they have long trained and with whom they share a camaraderie is not known. The records of the two elements of the 1st Para committed to date, one in Sam Neua and the other in the Nam Cadinh area, do not encourage optimism in regard to their future performance.

5. With reference to alternative B, para 1 above, assuming that:

A. Phoumi redeploys his forces against the Pathet Lao rather than against Vientiane,

B. The Pathet Lao have not been substantially reinforced during the past eight weeks,

C. The Pathet Lao level of activity continues at approximately the same level of isolated, small-scale engagements which characterized PL operations in the 3rd and 4th Mil Regs in the last year.

D. His troops are reconstituted and imbued with at least the same degree of sense of mission in opposing the Pathet Lao that they possessed prior to the coup, then and only then is it believed that the Phoumi forces in the southern regions should be able to gradually restore the security situation that existed prior to 9 Aug.

6. Disregarding international implications, other addition of LTAG teams at BN level would materially increase the prospects of success of such operations as envisioned either paras 1A or 1B above.

Brown

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418. Memorandum of Discussion at the 462d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 6, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1 and 2.]

2.[3.] *Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security*

Mr. Dulles said that since the Council had been discussing limited war, he felt it would be appropriate to start his briefing with Laos. Since last week's truce between the Kong Le forces in Vientiane and the Phoumi forces at Savannakhet, the situation had disintegrated. The truce did not work out because Kong Le did not consider himself bound by it. The Pathet Lao have been gaining strength and Souvanna Phouma has indicated a willingness to negotiate with them. The allegiance of various military forces in some of the outlying districts of Laos is uncertain. Mr. Dulles said he did not know what had happened

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Boggs on October 6.

as a result of some military movements around Sam Neua. One report was that Phoumi forces approaching that place had gone over to the Pathet Lao; other reports indicated these forces were defeated in action. Souvanna Phouma is about to go to Luang Prabang to negotiate with the King. In any case, Mr. Dulles was convinced that the situation was serious. One immediate question was what the U.S. Military Mission should do. Some U.S. officers are attached to Laotian divisions of doubtful loyalty.

Mr. Gates wondered whether our Ambassador had been able to put enough backbone in the King to make possible a fair conference with the Pathet Lao. Mr. Merchant said he had no report on this matter yet. He did not have much to add to Mr. Dulles' briefing. It had been agreed that the U.S. would get local currency into Laos to pay Phoumi's forces. He felt that the situation in Laos, in general, was difficult and complicated. One difficulty lay in the war-weariness of the Laotians, which led to a deterioration of the will of the Laotian forces to fight the Pathet Lao. It appears more and more that Souvanna Phouma is either a willing accomplice or a captive of Kong Le. Since the first week in August, the U.S. has been trying to get the non-Communist leaders to cooperate to avoid civil war among different units of the Laotian army. Our Ambassador is seeing the King now in a last effort to persuade him to use his royal prerogatives to form a coalition government and halt deterioration of the political situation, under threat of withdrawing U.S. aid. The results of the interview may be the basis for hard decisions. We may have to abandon our effort at unity and as an alternative give all-out support to the Phoumi element still willing to fight. Mr. Merchant concluded his observations by recalling that before his recent coup, Kong Le had been one of the staunchest anti-Communists.

Mr. McCone asked how the change in Kong Le could be accounted for. Mr. Merchant said perhaps Kong Le had been an undercover Communist all the time.

Mr. Dulles pointed out that corruption in the government was an important factor in the Laotian situation. Souvanna Phouma had indicated a willingness to resume diplomatic relations with the USSR through the Soviet Ambassador in Cambodia. It was possible that a neutralist government leaning toward Communism would be the outcome in Vientiane soon unless we can recoup the situation through Phoumi, who does inexplicable things but still fights.

[Here follow discussion of subject unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Marion W. Boggs

419. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant) to the Acting Secretary of State[1]

Washington, October 6, 1960.

SUBJECT

Laos

Following a meeting on another subject in my office this morning with Messrs. Dulles, Gray, Irwin and Parrott, the subject of Laos came up. I read to them under pledge of confidence Vientiane's 680 and 681 (latter Top Secret), both of Oct. 5.[2] I also loaned to Jack Irwin my copy of Vientiane's 680 at his request on his pledge that he would show it only to Tom Gates and General Lemnitzer, make no copies of it, and return it to me.

We requested Mr. Irwin to secure immediately Defense's best military estimate, based on the latest field reports from all their PEO's, of the current military capability of Phoumi's force, including Order of Battle, state of morale, etc. Mr. Irwin agreed to obtain this and will endeavor to have it tomorrow. [*3 lines of source text not declassified*]

It was further agreed that no definitive decision could be taken with respect to any new course of policy and action in Laos until after we had received Ambassador Brown's report of his October 6 meeting with the King at Luang Prabang. It was further explicitly agreed that any decision to give Phoumi exclusive, massive support should be made by the President in the knowledge what the alternatives were and what risks were attached to each possible course of action.

I have informed Mr. Steeves of the foregoing and requested him to start preliminary drafting on a paper which could be used to place the issue before the President, recognizing that this draft cannot be completed until we have received and considered Ambassador Brown's report on his interview with the King. Mr. Steeves and I also agreed that, prior to presenting the matter to the President (which may be necessary in the next 48 or 72 hours), we should have a small meeting probably limited to yourself, Tom Gates, Lem, Allen Dulles, Irwin, Steeves, and myself.[3]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–660. Secret; Eyes Only.

[2] Documents 416 and 417.

[3] The following note appears at the bottom of the source text in an unknown hand: "Meeting set up for 2:30 Friday [October 7] in Gates' office with Gates, Irwin, Merchant, probably Allen Dulles and Lemnitzer, and anyone you wish to bring. Gates wants to keep the meeting small." See Document 421.

420. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 6, 1960—11 p.m.

683. Addressees pass interested agencies. Following is report audience King 1130 Oct 6. I said I had come on instructions.[2] Expressed pleasure my govt at initiative King had taken last week bring about meeting military commanders Luang Prabang. This had seemed offer beginning of hope for improvement situation. Unfortunately situation had continued deteriorate rapidly, particularly in matter extension power and improved position Pathet Lao. Situation continuing worsen. I was instructed impress upon His Majesty most important take second step in plan he had outlined to me Sept 22[3] and call political figures together arrive at political solution. In fact, situation was so critical that USG felt drastic measures were required, such as King's taking power into own hands and appointing Prime Minister and C-in-C capable of dealing with situation. We did not feel Souvanna had shown himself able cope with Pathet Lao and did not feel he should attempt negotiate with them from position weakness.

King said hope useful meeting reconciliation between Savannakhet and Vientiane had been destroyed by action Vientiane by [*of?*] attacking at Nam Cadinh morning after cease-fire had been agreed under Royal aegis.

Souvanna had just seen him and had asked him telegraph Savannakhet ordering Boun Oum and Phoumi dissolve revolutionary committee and acknowledge allegiance legal govt. He told Souvanna he could not do this. Said was up to govt to govern. They could seek reconciliation or they could seek capture Savannakhet and subdue committee by force. This was up to them. If they could not put themselves in command whole situation then they should resign. (It was not clear, and I could not get it clear, whether he had said this last sentence to Souvanna or was simply saying it to me.)

He said Souvanna felt Phoumi and Boun Oum at end their tether and was much more concerned about negotiations with Pathet Lao than with them.

King criticized Souvanna severely not only for breach cease-fire but for letting Pathet Lao get in such position strength and for his activities Sam Neua. He said Kong Le was still force in Vientiane and that Pathet Lao were pulling strings there.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–660. Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Passed to USUN as Tosec 68.

[2] See Document 412.

[3] See Document 404.

King said people Laos ignorant dangers Communism. They were apathetic. They had enough to eat and unaware dangers that faced them. They believed in promises that peace could be made with Pathet Lao. They would remain apathetic unless aroused by some explosion. Perhaps this was necessary. When they had been aroused he would act (he did not specify how). He thought probably things would have to get worse before they got better.

I reiterated how important it was for him to act. He was only person who had power and influence now to act to resolve situation and establish firm govt. I cited the more conciliatory tone Radios Vientiane and Savannakhet in last two days. King refused believe this and said two sides still snarled at each other over radio. He asked why Radio Vientiane continued to say Vientiane will capture Savannakhet. (We have not heard this for last two days.)

I said if no action taken, all might be lost. King said perhaps all was already lost. At this point I thought he was going to cry.

He said it was sad for a Monarch to meet with his military commanders, one side feeling that it had scored off other by having succeeded in having meeting, by [*but?*] both sides full of suspicion and then a breach of cease-fire.

King said he could only act in accordance Constitution. Could not act without support of either or both a united army or a united public opinion. He had neither. Laos was suffering from democracy imposed upon a politically immature and apathetic people, saddling them with responsibilities of self-government for which they were not ready.

He said Souvanna had wide support of people deluded by illusory hopes and hearing what they wanted hear. Leaders at Savannakhet had no popular support largely because of their personal reputations. He again recounted deficiencies Boun Oum. He said arms was not firm even in south.

I told King about our suspension aid, since under present circumstances our aid not being effectively used for preservation of integrity country and in sense was being used permit two parties to fight against each other. I said we were ready channel aid through him, or through any channel he could establish, to troops ready fight Pathet Lao. He said he fully understood that people receiving aid had duty to free world and donors to use aid for purposes for which it was given. He wished we had acted like this before. Let troops go without pay and food for while. They would learn lesson. Withdrawal aid would have its effect one way or other.

I said I had told Souvanna about suspension aid and he had said govt would pay from own resources. He knew about two hundred million kip borrowed from National Bank and was aware its adverse implications for stability kip.

I suggested that progress might be made by having new govt and Assembly come Luang Prabang where atmosphere freer than at Vientiane. He simply commented that there were no men of courage in Assembly. He said some of them were in Savannakhet, some of them were in Tokyo. He repeated that coup had long been planned and was supported by unnamed persons of importance. He spoke of great responsibility of US in this situation without defining when questioned what he meant. He said Laos needs support of big power. US should not take position that it would only help country if it helped itself. SEATO was not important help. He was not certain whether it would even intervene if situation got very critical. Powers to north might intervene. He recognized that intervention by friendly outside forces would precipitate intervention from north who are much closer than SEATO.

I made final plea that King act as we had suggested. If he succeeded we would be glad resume our aid and consider public statement of support next government. If meeting failed, situation would be no worse than before. I thought both sides might now be willing to come to Luang Prabang. The King only said this would be very difficult.

King went back frequently over past history and complained again that present situation would never have arisen if Somsanith govt had not so incontinently resigned.

He said several times he would act to appoint new govt only if Souvanna resigned or if Assembly took action make it do same. In commenting on undesirability of negotiating with Pathet Lao, he said Souvanna claimed he was just going to negotiate about implementation of 57 agreements. In King's view, those agreements had been made. There was nothing left to negotiate about with respect to them. Let Souvanna get along with their implementation if he established.

He said Souvanna would see him again later in day, "he probably wants to know what US Ambassador said to me." He said he would simply tell Souvanna that I had expressed US Govt's anxiety about situation and our concern at increased strength and influence Pathet Lao.

Comment: In this interview, King reverted to his attitude of reluctance act shown interview Sept 13.[4] He seemed disgusted with all concerned, particularly Souvanna, even with people of Laos in general. He seemed feel he had been rebuffed in his one effort at reconciliation and therefore willing to let situation further degenerate rather than commit Royal prestige in effort which he inwardly fears might fail and thereby further diminish Royal power and authority. Whether this will continue to be his mood remains to be seen. He did, of course,

[4] See footnote 7, Document 394.

change between Sept 13 and Sept 22. I think he will think seriously about what I said and what Souvanna says to him this afternoon may also bear upon his decision if any. But I not optimistic respect any decisive or effective action. Hope send comments and recommendations with respect situation foregoing presents for US tomorrow when we have received and considered result Calhoun visit Savannakhet.

Brown

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421. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 8, 1960—12:11 a.m.

384. Reference to your 683[2] and King's decision to retain Souvanna Phouma.

Joint meeting of DOD, JCS and CAS just completed at which Dillon, Gates, Merchant, Dulles, Lemnitzer and members of their staffs present. Following concept was agreed as basis our course of action in present crisis in Laos.

In view of King's unwillingness to assume responsibility requested of him it was agreed to make last desperate effort to work through and with Souvanna Phouma as the legal facade of legitimate government and at same time supporting Phoumi and other anti-Communist forces as outlined later. As basic to whole approach, for your information and guidance, you should understand that should this last desperate ploy not be effective difficult alternative must face us of supporting exclusively the anti-Communist elements without reference to Souvanna Phouma's position. If he is willing to cooperate and do the King's bidding and assist in an effort to save the integrity of Laos there are set forth below courses of action with which his compliance is required.

You are instructed to tell Souvanna Phouma in presenting our position to him that we must have his concurrence with the following actions if he is to earn US confidence and support:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–660. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Steeves and cleared with SEA, Merchant, and O'Donnell of OSD/ISA. Also sent niact to CINCPAC for POLAD and Bangkok and priority to London, Paris, Canberra, and Saigon.

[2] *Supra.*

1. Move the seat of government at least temporarily from Vientiane to Luang Prabang including the cabinet where he can be near the person of the King and out of danger of the Kong Le threat.

2. Take all feasible steps to ensure that Kong Le does not initiate action against any FAL units, and desist immediately from any threatening gesture or carrying out of hostilities against Savannakhet.

3. Ensure through Ouan and through forces at his disposal with the advice and counsel of PEO that all feasible precautions and steps be taken to preserve the assets of government including the Treasury preferably removing liquid cash to Luang Prabang.

4. Desist from current negotiations with the Pathet Lao and leave this whole issue in abeyance until such time as the government may be able to talk to the PL from a position of unity and strength. [3]

Begin FYI:

Supply of Anti-Communist Forces. Due to infeasibility of utilizing centralized control under current precarious situation, technique of direct supply to forces will be employed where required. This task will be planned and executed by CINCPAC with the cooperation of the various military Regions and CHPEO and existing arrangements Chief JUSMAAG Thailand.

Special arrangements are required for Savannakhet because of the importance of the concentration there. In moving in supplies already in the pipeline or those yet to be authorized care should be exercised to move with as little ostentation as possible in order not to arouse undue suspicion that center of military operations being centered in Savannakhet.

To ensure that necessary controls are exercised at Savannakhet, high level political and military advice is being assigned to ensure appropriate control. It is essential to this overall plan that Phoumi cooperate and understand the overall plan and concept which will form essential part of Advisors' approach to him. This of course implies Phoumi's being subject to his government if Souvanna meets the conditions. Appointment of advisors will be subject of subsequent message. [4]

In addition it is recognized that PEO personnel will be required to serve in continuing advisory capacity in operations and logistics. In this matter both latitude and discretion required but caution must be

[3] In telegram 708 from Vientiane, October 9, Brown reported that he had made the démarche to Souvanna. Brown thought that Souvanna's response was as encouraging as could be expected. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–960; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Telegram 387 to Vientiane, October 8, informed the Embassy that Phoumi's adviser would be Robert J. Jantzen from Bangkok. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–860)

observed to ensure US advisory personnel not serve with units in combat.[5]

Diplomatic Action. We are calling in French, British and Australians immediately to inform them of our overall plan.[6] In order to strengthen Souvanna Phouma's chances of succeeding we are asking them to use their influence with him to carry out the suggestions outlined above. Inasmuch as they have been insistent on our support of him we should get their immediate assistance in gaining his cooperation. Similar information should be passed in the respective capitals to representatives of these governments in order to acquaint them with this concept. End FYI.[7]

For Bangkok: Ambassador Johnson should inform Sarit concerning the details of this plan of action. Ambassador Johnson's recommendation also requested on extent to which SEATO representatives of the powers mentioned above should be informed.

Special Mission. In order to bring the thinking and details of this concept to all points concerned and engage in consultation with Ambassador and Country Team plus carrying out any other representation deemed advisable, special mission of Mr. Parson, Mr. Irwin of Defense and Admiral Riley of CINCPAC will be arriving soon as possible. Notification of travel plans upcoming.

Dillon

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[5] In JCS telegram DA 984040 to CINCPAC, October 8, the JCS instructed Acting PEO Chief Calhoun to inform Phoumi that PEO personnel would be stationed at Savannakhet and vicinity as logistics and operations advisers. (*Ibid.*, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1960, Part II; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Accounts of these discussions are in a memorandum of conversation, October 8 (Department of State, FE Files: Lot 62 D 26, MC–France), and telegram 389 to Vientiane, October 8 (*ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/10–860). Both are included in the microfiche supplement.

[7] In telegram 702 from Vientiane, October 8, Brown requested the following clarifications:

"Would help greatly if we could have clear picture our present objective. Is it merely restore Phoumi's morale and effectiveness to keep him in picture to fight PL and have better bargaining power with Souvanna? Is it to support him to overthrow Souvanna? Or is it something else? I foresee much trouble unless everyone is absolutely clear on what we are after." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–860)

Telegram 396 to Vientiane, October 9, informed Brown that the "level of aid to Phoumi, at least until we know Souvanna's reaction, should aim at maintaining morale and capabilities southern forces in being against PL." (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–960; included in the microfiche supplement)

422. Memorandum for the Record of a Meeting, Department of State, Washington, October 8, 1960, 12:45 p.m.[1]

At 1245 on Saturday, 8 October 1960 at a meeting in Mr. Dillon's office attended by Mr. Dillon, General Lemnitzer, Mr. Irwin, Mr. Parsons, Mr. Steeves and Rear Admiral O'Donnell, Mr. Dillon outlined what he considered to be the objectives of the trip to Southeast Asia which is being made by Mr. Irwin, Mr. Parsons and Vice Admiral Riley.

1. Get as close as possible to a unified appreciation of the situation in Laos. What can be done with the resources available in the area? Isolate differences. Mr. Dillon hoped that there would be no differences.

2. See the King. Repeat the policy cited in State cable to Vientiane 384.[2] Buck up the King. Do what is needed to evoke from him the actions necessary to support U.S. position in the current situation.

3. See Phoumi. Tell him that we support him. Tell him that he must support U.S. objectives with resources that are made available to him. Parsons wondered about his and Mr. Irwin's going to Savannakhet. He did not believe it would be judicious for an Assistant Secretary of State and an Assistant Secretary of Defense to travel to Savannakhet to visit Phoumi. It was decided that talks should be held with Phoumi either at Luang Prabang or Bangkok.

4. The group should not go to Vientiane until after Souvanna Phouma had made a decision or had completed action on the conditions outlined in State cable 384. Going to Vientiane prior to a settlement of these conditions might provoke Kong Le to some imprudent action.

5. There should be agreement on the measure of support and the rhythm of military supplies into Savannakhet and for Phoumi.

6. For public relations purposes, an announcement will be made here in order to eliminate the speculation about this group being a fire brigade on its way to Laos. The cover story would talk about a visit to Southeast Asia and neighboring countries.

Mr. Dillon said that the visit to Saigon might be of almost equal importance to the visit to Laos in light of many alarming reports from there. He also knew about the civil guard going under the Department of Defense in Viet Nam and believed that the team could get valuable knowledge about the problems and determinations that will have to be made.

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[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 B 2170, 092 Laos. Top Secret. There is no indication on the source text who drafted this memorandum.

[2] *Supra.*

The point was raised as to whether it might be possible for Irwin to go to Savannakhet under circumstances where Parsons might not want to go. Mr. Dillon said we should decide that on the spot.

Mr. Steeves said that the French had been informed of the material in the State cable 384 and that they had bought it. Both General Lemnitzer and Mr. Irwin reminded the conference that there had been disturbing knowledge of French intervention on the side of Kong Le and also some interference with Phoumi and American traffic into Seno.

7. Mr. Dillon raised the point about the press stories which were based on Souvanna Phouma's announcement that Americans were cutting off aid. Mr. Dillon went on to say that the team should be prepared perhaps to make decisions after consideration on the spot as to what is advisable. He said so far as he was concerned there was no intention to stop paying the troops or stopping economic aid. He recognizes the problems of paying either through the secular [*regular?*] channels of Vientiane or through Phoumi. He felt we must be ready to accommodate both situations. Mr. Irwin called attention to what he felt was weak language with respect to furnishing material in State cable 384. Mr. Dillon responded and said he did not believe that this language would give Mr. Brown the ability to hold up needed supplies. Mr. Irwin raised the point of sending a senior officer, perhaps a ranking Brigadier General to go into Savannakhet under existing cover, to act as a senior military advisor to Phoumi. This was discussed without determination and it seemed to be the consensus of the meeting that probably an officer of the rank of Colonel so as not to outrank Mr. Calhoun would be preferable. The name of Colonel Sidney V. Bingham who recently left OSD, where he had been Laos desk officer, and who is now attached to the MAAG in Saigon, was mentioned. Mr. Irwin asked what are our real views on Gen. Phoumi. What do we feel to be Phoumi's long-term role so far as our policy is concerned. Mr. Irwin also mentioned that in the initial draft of the State cable 384 presented by State to Adm O'Donnell and General Gray, that they seemed to be continuing a policy of downgrading Phoumi. For example that the officer should be advised to keep Phoumi under "wraps."

Mr. Dillon said that they believed Phoumi would need to be controlled, that they believed he should be supported but that he should have such control as to constrain him to use U.S. resources in a manner consistent with U.S. objectives. As to his long-term role, Mr. Dillon said he left that to the team to determine.

Another point was made that the interference at Seno had been protested to the French Ambassador.

Mr. Irwin also pointed out that State cable 384 did not seem to tell anybody to go to Phoumi and tell him that we were supporting him. State responded by saying that this was to be covered by a separate

message [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].[4] At the time of this meeting, it looked as though Mr. Jantzen who is now in Bangkok would be the representative with Phoumi and that he would be directed to give Phoumi assurance of support. Mr. Irwin raised the point whether it would not be desirable to tell the King immediately [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] about our policy and about the visit of the team. State responded by saying that they did not think that anybody but the Ambassador should do this and they felt it would be counter productive to have the Ambassador press for another audience with the King at this time.

[4] Not found.

423. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, October 9, 1960—4:01 p.m.

494. Eyes only for Parsons. Instructions to Assistant Secretary Parsons on his Special Mission to Southeast Asia are as follows:

1. To identify and reconcile points of difference relating to our policy in Laos which may exist within the Country Team or, more importantly, between the Ambassador and Washington. When this identification process has been completed, points which the Special Mission cannot reconcile to be reported to Washington for decision.

2. If the situation permits, the Special Mission will proceed to Luang Prabang for further consultation with the King. On this mission Ambassador Brown should accompany the Mission so that there is no connotation of Ambassador's prerogatives being overridden. It is hoped that other principals on the Lao scene can be met in Luang Prabang, particularly Souvanna Phouma, if he has decided to cooperate with our bill of particulars as set forth in 384.[2] The propriety and possibility of the visit to Luang Prabang will be decided after the Mission reaches Bangkok and has had an opportunity to coordinate this move with Embassies Bangkok and Vientiane.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 110.15-PA/10-960. Top Secret; Priority; No Distribution Outside Department. Drafted by Steeves and cleared with Merchant in substance.

[2] Document 421.

3. To confer with Phoumi to further clarify our policy involving him. This meeting should preferably also take place in Luang Prabang but if that impossible Bangkok may be the alternate site. If at all possible this trip to Bangkok for this purpose should be classified.

4. To provide guidance on the scene with respect to supply of anti-PL forces of the FAL. Within the framework of the directive set forth in 384, to set up a pattern and rhythm for this supply in a manner to control and certainly not to disturb delicate political situations. In this, one consideration at all times must be overriding and determining, which is to conduct the support and supply operation in such a manner as not to place us in unfavorable light should the whole Lao situation be brought into the UN.

5. The Mission is given authority to act without further reference to Washington on the granting or cutting-off of aid to Laos from US sources.

6. To confer with Embassies Bangkok Vientiane Saigon Phnom Penh on individual country problems or those area and interrelated problems which require coordination. If deemed necessary and if possible, to chair a conference of the four ambassadors concerned at a place of his choosing.

7. Although related to Item 6, to recognize that a somewhat separate problem exists in Viet-Nam with respect to our problems there and to work with Ambassador Durbrow in the necessary démarches to President Diem.

8. Authorized to travel to other points as required, such as Manila and Taiwan.

10. [9.] To recommend to Washington a course of action to be followed if the concept of our outline of operations set forth in 384 cannot be implemented or in the event a situation develops which makes this whole approach inoperable.

Herter

424. Memorandum of a Conference With the President, Washington, October 11, 1960[1]

OTHERS PRESENT

Secretary Dillon, Mr. Merchant, Mr. Steeves, Secretary Gates, General Lemnitzer, Mr. Allen Dulles, General Goodpaster

General Lemnitzer began with a briefing on the present military situation in Laos, showing the location of the Pathet Lao forces, the deployment of Kong Le forces around Vientiane, the location of Phoumi's forces near Savannakhet, and the location of some independent non-Communist forces in the northern region. He said that supplies are being flown in to Phoumi and will be flown in to the non-Communist area in the north. The military situation is not at all satisfactory, however.

Mr. Allen Dulles said that the Soviet Ambassador to Cambodia is scheduled to go to Vientiane tomorrow. He added that there is strong evidence that Souvanna Phouma is dealing with the Pathet Lao. The Soviet Ambassador may present promises of Soviet aid to Souvanna Phouma, and the latter may be waiting for this in order to play the United States and the Soviets against each other.

Mr. Dillon said that a very difficult problem has developed since a month ago when, on our urging, both Souvanna Phouma and Phoumi had gone to Luang Prabang to form a new government. The parliament was assembled there. As a result of this meeting, a new government was formed, with Souvanna Phouma at the head. The new government then went back to Vientiane, but Phoumi did not accompany them. In fact, he went into open rebellion. As a result, we are now in the difficulty that the legal government, to which the man we support is in opposition, is that of Souvanna Phouma. The representatives of this government now at the United Nations have standing authority to request the intervention of the United Nations at any time so that we have hanging over our heads the threat of being "hailed

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret. Drafted by Goodpaster on October 12. On October 8, Dillon telephoned Goodpaster to arrange this briefing for the President. Dillon explained the need for such a meeting:

"CDD said the situation in Laos is not good, that they had a meeting yesterday afternoon with Gates, Lemnitzer, etc. and told him to be sure to see a copy of 384 from [*to*] Laos—that if he didn't have one we would send him a copy. CDD told Gen. Goodpaster that we are sending Parsons, Irwin and Riley (CINCPAC) to see what is going on on-the-spot because there seems to be a difference of opinion between the people here and the country team over there so we have decided to send a group out. CDD said he thought the President ought to have a briefing about the situation, the alternatives that are before us and what we were considering because some of them are not very pleasant." Goodpaster called Dillon back to tell him that the meeting could be held at 11:15 a.m. on October 11. (Notes of telephone conversation, October 8; Department of State, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation: Lot 64 D 199)

into" the UN for aggressive intervention at any time. In these circumstances we are trying to work through the King, who is the legitimate head of the nation. We have cut off our aid to Laos, a large component of which goes for pay of the Laotian troops, and have told Souvanna Phouma that we will resume it only if he takes certain steps toward a solution satisfactory to us, including moving the government to Luang Prabang where the King is, removing the governmental treasury from Vientiane, etc. The French and British are supporting us in this action, although reluctantly. In addition, we are sending in supplies to Phoumi [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].

Mr. Dillon then said there has been for a number of weeks a difference of view as between our people in Vientiane, headed by the Ambassador, and the people concerned with Laos in our departments here. The Ambassador inclines to supporting Souvanna Phouma, whereas back here our officials want to support Phoumi. Assistant Secretary Parsons and Assistant Secretary Irwin, together with Admiral Riley, are now in Bangkok to resolve these differences of view and try to determine what further actions we should be prepared to take if the situation does not develop favorably.

Mr. Gates said he is very pessimistic as to the possibility of keeping the country for the free world, even if Souvanna Phouma does not make some kind of deal with the Communists. The prospects are not good. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] with regard to the problem of paying the Laotian troops, that we are now [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] sending funds to Phoumi so that he can pay the troops under his command. Even this action is complicated, however, by the fact that we do not have local Laotian currency to use, since this is all held in the treasury in Vientiane.

Mr. Merchant said that Prime Minister Sarit in Thailand (who is a close relative of Phoumi's) is very deeply concerned over the Laotian situation, and that the entire government of Thailand, as well as that of Viet-Nam, is deeply disturbed about the situation. Mr. Dillon said we are troubled over a split within the SEATO organization, with the British, French and Australians holding back with regard to any vigorous action.

General Lemnitzer reported that two additional parachute companies have been moved into the southern end of the country, and these should strengthen the Phoumi forces materially. He added that we are resuming the supply of arms assistance to the Phoumi forces.

After further discussion, the President said the only suggestion he could give, beyond what is now being done, would be to try to take special measures to win Souvanna Phouma to our side, such as placing funds in escrow for him in Bangkok, and try to get him to request our help in dealing with the situation.

G
Brigadier General, USA

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425. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 11, 1960—midnight.

729. Department pass Defense. From Parsons. Reference: Deptel 384.[2] Ambassador Brown took Secretary Irwin, Admiral Riley and myself to see Souvanna late today and we had two-hour talk. Following is brief summary main points: 1) Parsons opened with statement our concept of aid to unify non-Communist Lao elements in order face PL from position of strength. He recited historical facts, indicating PL were instrument of international Communism and as such would never cease their efforts to win country. He ended by citing insurgency of 1959 and events of 1960 as two latest Communist efforts to win country, the latter being most dangerous of all. During presentation he again emphasized main points of Deptel 384 and reminded [him?] Ambassador Brown could tell him General Phoumi's reaction which [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Bangkok has no doubt by now reported. Ambassador Brown then stated Phoumi had accepted these points and in response to Souvanna's question he added Phoumi proposed no conditions of his own.

2) During Parsons' presentation, he made special point of impending arrival Soviet Ambassador, stating USSR did not work for independence and integrity of free-world countries. This had been proven true in Congo and would be in Laos. No doubt Russia would quickly make offer of large line of credit which might sound well but

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1160. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Canberra, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 6:58 p.m., October 12.

[2] Document 421.

would prove to be of little tangible or immediate value. He then contrasted this with years in which US and true friends of Laos had extended very substantial aid of various kinds.

3) Souvanna gave apologia for his policy and actions of 1956–57 and indictment of what he considered provocative errors of subsequent governments. His present view was that Lao army and people will no longer struggle and that therefore talks with PL must be held to implement 1957 accords before PL present even greater demands. During his presentation he made clear that he advocates containment of PL not by military action but by education of rural population so as to engage their active loyalty.

4) Ambassador Brown asked Souvanna if PL had at opening meeting yesterday accepted Souvanna's preconditions; namely (A), restoring arms to FAL soldiers disarmed at Sam Neua and (B), restoration RLG's authority there. Souvanna replied PL would answer tomorrow.

5) Parsons asked if Souvanna could give indication of RLG's reaction to proposals in Deptel 384. Souvanna said Cabinet had discussed move to Luang Prabang this morning and nearly all were agreeable. Minister Finance Inpeng was charged with certain necessary preparations. General Ouan was charged with necessary precautions to insure security of government.

6) Secretary Irwin asked if it would help to have Phoumi meet with Souvanna in LP. Latter replied there was nothing to meet about; all that was required was for Phoumi to acknowledge the legal government. He added that he was doubtful that Phoumi would go through with this and said he did not understand what Phoumi wanted or had in mind; in fact, he suspected there must be a plot with Sarit of which neither Ambassador Brown nor he himself had knowledge. Parsons [garble—interjected?] that we had made clear to all friends of Laos importance we attached to unity of country and that we had impression Sarit fully understood this and had, in fact, taken very restrained line toward problems of Laos. Parsons very much doubted that there was any such plot.

7) At several times during talk, we indicated it would greatly facilitate our task of aiding non-Communist Laos if unity could be achieved on basis referenced Deptel. Souvanna at one point expressed bitterness that "friends of Laos" were siding Phoumi in setting up military base in Pakse for purpose unknown and while Phoumi was in status of rebel. On whole, however, he gave impression that he preferred so conduct affairs as to avoid further split with us. He did not give us any reliable indication however as to whether he is accepting, if indeed he is accepting, proposals referenced Deptel because of Kong Le–PL situation in Vientiane area or because he knows Laos must have American aid, or both.

We will report at greater length and comment as soon as possible. We have audience with King 11 a.m. 13th in LP and expect see Souvanna again here in evening at his suggestion.

Brown

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426. Memorandum of Discussion at the 463d Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 13, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and item 1. The discussion on Laos was part of item 2, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security."]

Mr. Dulles then briefed the Council on the situation in Laos. He noted that we did not yet have a full report on the mission of Mr. Parsons, Mr. Irwin and Admiral Riley. They had gone initially to Bangkok, then to Vientiane, and were just now arriving in Luang Prabang. A preliminary report on their talk with Souvanna Phouma had been received this morning but there had not been time yet to analyze it.[2]

The President inquired whether they had seen Phoumi while they were in Bangkok. Mr. Dulles stated that they had not. Secretary Dillon went on to point out that we had not decided where or when they will see Phoumi. They would try to get him to come to Luang Prabang. If they could not see him there, they would attempt to arrange a meeting in Bangkok, and if that proved impossible, Mr. Irwin would go to see him in Savannakhet. Secretary Dillon went on to say that Phoumi's fortunes were up somewhat. Troops in Plaines des Jarres had disassociated themselves from the Vientiane group although we were not sure whether they had lined up fully with Phoumi. The situation in the First Military Region was also better. According to the latest report, Secretary Dillon stated, the government had agreed to move to Luang Prabang. This had been suggested to them as a result of instructions from Washington. We were not sure whether Souvanna Phouma was playing straight on this. However, the agreement would help us smoke him out; if he did not move, we could draw certain conclusions.

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret. Drafted by Johnson on October 18.

[2] Apparent reference to telegram 729, *supra*.

Secretary Dillon noted that a preliminary meeting between the government and the Pathet Lao had taken place and that another was scheduled today. The new Soviet Ambassador, who is also the Soviet Ambassador to Cambodia, was arriving today in Vientiane. However, in order to be formally accredited, he had to go to Luang Prabang. Thus all of the forces involved in this situation were coming together and a denouement could be expected in the next day or two. Secretary Dillon went on to observe that one difficulty in getting Souvanna Phouma to go to Luang Prabang was the fact that he was engaged in negotiations with the Pathet Lao. We had asked him to postpone these negotiations. He had not acceded but had stated that no agreements would be reached on hard terms.

Mr. Dulles resumed his briefing, stating that we think the Soviet Ambassador will make some kind of offer to the Laotian Government. Souvanna Phouma had been warned of this possibility by Mr. Irwin and Mr. Parsons. It looked as though General Ouane, the senior military commander in Souvanna Phouma's camp, was breaking away from him more and more. We may be able to induce him to go to Luang Prabang. This would permit the possible fusion of his forces with those of Phoumi. Mr. Dulles concluded that the military situation had improved.

Secretary Dillon noted that we had made representations to our allies on our plan for dealing with the situation. The French had come along best; they had bought it. They did not think it was possible to avoid the first meeting between Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao but they agreed that after this meeting, Souvanna Phouma should disengage and go to Luang Prabang. The British reaction had been the worst. They feared that if Souvanna Phouma leaves Vientiane, it would mean turning Vientiane over to the Pathet Lao. They also believe that great care should be taken in breaking off negotiations with the Pathet Lao, although they agree that no agreements should be made in the present weak situation. These views had been conveyed to us as the considered views of the British Foreign Office. In the view of the Foreign Office, the conclusion of a cease-fire between the Pathet Lao and the government was the overriding consideration. The Foreign Office believed that gradual progress should be made toward a neutralist government as the only solution in the long run. The Foreign Office had told the British Ambassador not to support the U.S. plan but it had asked him to listen to the U.S. and to go along generally but not on details of the plan.

Mr. Dulles pointed out that 200 paratroopers trained in Thailand were now in the Fourth Military Region in Laos. He also noted that there was a press report that all Thai nationals in Vientiane had been ordered back to Thailand. A figure of 20,000 such nationals had been mentioned. There are not that many Thai in Vientiane. It was more

like the total for all of Laos. We do not know why the Thai Government has taken this action. Secretary Herter observed that it sounded a little ominous. Mr. Dulles noted that this report had not been confirmed but that the indications were that the Thai Foreign Ministry had made such an announcement.

[Here follow discussion of subjects unrelated to Laos and the remaining agenda items.]

Robert H. Johnson

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427. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 13, 1960—9 p.m.

737. Eyes only Secretary. Bangkok—eyes only Ambassador. CINCPAC—exclusive for CINCPAC. His Majesty received Secretary Parsons, Secretary Irwin, Admiral Riley and Ambassador at 1115 in Luang Prabang.

After opening exchange of courtesies, HM expressed his sorrow and humiliation at situation in which his country now finds itself. He said however that since last meeting of military officers in Luang Prabang situation had improved considerably. Soldiers throughout country and indeed people generally were beginning be uneasy about government's policy and particularly negotiations with Pathet Lao. This was true even in certain circles in Vientiane. Most civil servants disapproved of government's policy. General Ouan very worried about it.

HM expressed view that FAL were now united in their will fight PL and in opposition to policies of government. In three or four days commander first region planned announce his disapproval of government's policy and his withdrawal from its control, in order continue struggle against the PL. (*Comment:* We understand from other sources that Houmphan does not expect declare for Phoumi but to remain neutral and anti-Communist.)

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1360. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated niact to Bangkok and CINCPAC. Received at 7:44 p.m.

Similar statements were to be made throughout country and simultaneous attacks on PL would be launched countrywide. Even in Vientiane action would be taken not against government since it was not planned attack government anywhere in country but only against "certain persons".

(*Comment:* Implication HM left in our minds was that among those persons were Captain Kong Le, Quinim and one or two other leftist members of government.)

Thus the military were close to being reunited and by these actions would become reunited and would be fighting side by side.

Political situation seemed to HM to be rather simple. Government really was in three parts. First: Souvanna who was case by himself; isolated to extraordinary degree, unaware of what goes on around, behind or even against him. Second: Small group dominated by Quinim which was pro-PL or PL-dominated. Third: Rest of government which on whole opposed its policies.

HM felt cumulative effect of countrywide initiation hostilities against PL and declaration of opposition to government, especially from Colonel Houmphan, and possibly from influential circles in Vientiane, would be to show it to be both helpless and repudiated and leave Souvanna no alternative except resign.

In this case, all power would revert to King and he would appoint probably para-military government which would proceed with task of cleaning up PL. In this he would need support first in form arms, later money and certainly airlift. HM asked what US position would be under these circumstances.

Secretary Parsons said US always anxious support patriotic and anti-Communist elements in Laos. Was very important for us however have some legal authority, to call of which, we could legitimately respond. It would not do us or anyone else any good if we were arraigned before UN on charges improper interference internal affairs another country by reasons of supporting even anti-Communist elements against wishes legal government.

HM said he fully realized importance legal authority and international implications where it was lacking.

He felt that solution proposed was preferable to solution resulting from direct action by himself. This would appear as nationwide movement coming from people rather than as revolution inspired by palace.

He said that in addition to concern about negotiations with Pathet Lao under existing circumstances, people were very much worried about fact that very high ranking and widely respected Bonze had recently been killed in Vientiane. (*Comment:* No word any such occurrence here. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] contacts with Bonze community feel most unlikely any truth in report.)

King said he in communication all regions and with Vientiane. Message had been sent General Ouan asking him come Luang Prabang. He did not know whether Ouan would do so or not. He did not know whether signal for action would come from Vientiane or Luang Prabang.

The King said he realized the course of action proposed risked loss Vientiane and necessity regaining it by force. This was risk which had to be taken. He felt that action would be likely to take place by the weekend. Risk was that Pathet Lao might learn of plans and act first. He recognized struggle would be long and hard.

HM said he concerned about risk intervention from North and asked US position in such case.

Secretary Parsons reminded him of US reaction last year when similar situation was faced. Said HM could count on similar US reaction by this time. If matters should develop in this way, issue would be clear and US would have support its allies. King said he too most anxious for issue to be clear. He had not really doubted what Secretary's answer would be as he hoped things would develop so that events would constitute as much purely internal matter as possible with as little involvement of US as possible.

Secretary Parsons suggested it would be useful to know who people in charge program were so as, for example, be sure that requests for support were properly authorized. HM replied that he expected over-all command to be in Savannakhet. He only wanted one headquarters, not committees scattered around country. People at Savannakhet had already declared themselves as anti-Communist. They were militarily and politically most experienced leaders and strongest anti-Communists. They would have to take lead even if not too well loved throughout country.

Secretary Parsons said he thought King should be informed of his discussions with Souvanna. Not being aware of what King had just explained, and in view indications given Ambassador Brown October 6 that King was unwilling take action supplant Souvanna government, US had felt it must make best of Souvanna government. It had suggested to Souvanna that he move government to Luang Prabang in order get into freer atmosphere than Vientiane. King replied that Souvanna had spoken to him about this some time earlier. King had not felt it appropriate give advice and had told him to do as he wished. King's own view was that it too late for government move Luang Prabang. Its members, even Souvanna himself, might be arrested there, so unpopular were they. He said that whatever happens, he would [omission in the source text] Souvanna and see that he came to no personal harm.

King then made long speech about how he had fought Communism all his life and intended continue to end with surrender unthinkable, even if his own life should be lost. He also expressed complete trust in US which he had felt ever since US had saved Laos after Dien Bien Phu.

Secretary Irwin asked what effect HM thought arrival Soviet Ambassador would have on government and people. HM said it would be encouragement for government and anxiety for people.

Secretary Parsons told HM he had told Souvanna that Soviet aid would be for purpose enslavement country rather than help it. HM said he well aware of this.

Contrary to announcement on radio Vientiane, HM said royal ordinance approving establishment diplomatic relations with USSR had not been signed by him, in fact had not even been prepared. (*Comment:* Hard believe government would have let Soviet Ambassador come Vientiane before even preparing legal paper necessary establish diplomatic relations.)

King said putting out such information was an example of how PL control government. This matter was by no means settled.

Ambassador Brown called King's attention to newspaper reports that Soviet Ambassador was coming Luang Prabang. King expressed thanks for this information. Said with smile it might be necessary make special arrangements receive him. Certainly he was not coming present his letters of credence.

(*Comment:* While foregoing encouraging and much of it confirmed from other sources, King's extreme optimism and present appearance decisiveness should be regarded with considerable caution. Further comments follow.)

Brown

428. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Thailand[1]

Washington, October 15, 1960—5:41 p.m.

533. For Parsons. Vientiane's 742, 744, 745, 746 and Bangkok's 663, 664 and 666.[2] Your reports contained Reftels extremely helpful in giving Department more complete picture of current stage of developments. While you are undoubtedly now engaged in analysis of situation prior to submission your recommendations for action the follow few observations and suggestions are passed on:

1. Accurate transcript of your press statement was exceedingly useful in correcting extremely erroneous reports current here that negotiations had practically broken off and that "mission had failed". Your assurance that Laos still receiving aid and that idea of neutrality not repugnant to us and Souvanna so informed very helpful. We have attempted to get this correction into press here.

2. Your action re release of funds for continuation aid heartily approved.

3. Your conversation with King and Souvanna Phouma reveal very wide differences of understanding between the two with reference to the Soviet mission and reception their credentials by the King. Believe you should consider on urgent basis passing message to King telling him at least delay receiving Soviet mission and if in fact he was not informed of plans accrediting them to Laos that he use his royal prerogative in refusing to receive them. His Majesty should be informed that Fedorov, member of delegation, is well known agent with long experience in subversive activity acting in number of places under variety of aliases and obviously dangerous character. Consideration is being given to surfacing this info here.

FYI. If there is any basis under Lao Constitution on which King as Supreme Head of State or as Supreme Commander of Armed Forces could appeal for assistance in protecting his country, some thought should be given to encourage him to appeal to us over the head of his Prime Minister for this assistance if he feels presence of uninvited Russians, dangerous negotiations with Pathet Lao are in fact posing grave threats to throne.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1560. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Steeves and cleared with SEA, Dillon, and Cumming in substance and with L/FE. Repeated priority to Vientiane.

[2] These telgrams, October 14 and 15, contained reports of meetings, accounts of Lao press comments related to the Parsons mission, and Parsons' observations on U.S. aid to Laos and on detailing an Embassy officer to Savannakhet. (Telegrams 742, 744, 745, and 746 are *ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1460; telegram 663 from Bangkok is *ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/10–1460; and telegrams 664 and 666 from Bangkok are *ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1560; all included in the microfiche supplement)

5. Some of the above action is of course based on promise that Souvanna Phouma will not move to Luang Prabang and will not effectively resist Pathet Lao in the negotiations.

6. Your Bangkok 666 will be subject of separate message when your view has been coordinated with [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*].[3]

Herter

[3] Not found.

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429. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, October 15, 1960—10 p.m.

668. From Parsons. A principal task my mission with Assistant Secretary Irwin and Admiral Riley is to establish a pattern and rhythm for supply of anti-PL forces of FAL in manner to control and not disturb delicate political situation. It is our understanding one consideration at all times overriding and determining, namely, to conduct support and supply operation in such manner as not place US in unfavorable light should Lao situation be brought UN.

Objectives and governing principles thus clear. Their application in concrete cases, however, presents formidable difficulties and gives rise some differences of opinion.

All agreed first essential is provide Phoumi with competent political and military advisors Savannakhet. Their screening in light above principles will doubtless resolve many difficulties. Others will certainly still remain, arising fundamentally from two rather different approaches which are involved.

Situation may be clarified for US if coup contemplated by King materializes and he acts so as to provide US with clear legal authority with which to deal in anti-PL support. We cannot, however, count on this. Situation may drag on for some time in present divided condition, whether or not Souvanna does anything to respond our overtures pursuant Deptel 384.[2] Favorable response seems unlikely. In such

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1560. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution.

[2] Document 421.

event we will still be faced with fact Phoumi forces can be considered rebels as they have in fact been proclaimed by RLG.

Purpose of this telegram is to attempt set forth problems with which we will be faced in deciding each significant supply problem.

From viewpoint most effective support Phoumi forces, we should provide headquarters staff, operations and logistical personnel and establish effective communications system with equipment and staff. In order exercise control over Phoumi's actions and insure that material supplied is effectively used for purposes intended and to stiffen backbone troops, would also be desirable station PEO staff battalion level as well as original headquarters Phoumi forces.

That this involves serious risk conflict overriding principle referred to above is acknowledged by all.

Argument in favor is that furnishing any significant supplies or staff creates this risk, increments added only increase risk marginally, and it is important to do good job in order avoid waste of resources and loss country. To this end we should get fully prepared on spot as much in advance possible.

Other viewpoint is that objective can be met by boosting morale and maintaining supply forces in being. Objective at present juncture should be holding operation, not build up Phoumi forces for offensive or into even more effective fighting force than they were before. To this end we should infiltrate men and supplies on minimum essential basis, accepting thereby some loss efficiency and some military risks. Any great identification US support would really risk well-documented charges against US in UN.

President Eisenhower has just made eloquent presentation to UN[3] of US respect and support integrity and independence small nations UN and UN effort in Congo, in course of which he criticized direct Soviet aid to one faction in Congo. Khrushchev in reply attacked US as imperialist and UN as its tool. President's position was overwhelmingly upheld. It would be tragic at this moment to have US actions belie its words. Our position is not helped by fact that when DRV provides matériel and support for PL, US is critical as constituting external support dissident elements against government.

Two specific cases clearly illustrate problem:

1. Obviously desirable and certainly necessary for large-scale operation have adequate communication system Savannakhet. It is proposed send radio now Bangkok which would constitute full load C–46 aircraft, require three or four days to assemble and necessitate staff eight men to operate and maintain. This could not be concealed since

[3] Reference is to Eisenhower's address before the 15th Session of the U.N. General Assembly, September 22; for text, see *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960–61*, pp. 707–720.

antenna large and visible to passers-by and even if physical concealment possible, immediately it starts operation its existence would be known French and Commies to north.

Obvious that any commander contemplating operation would as first task establish adequate communications. Impossible give satisfactory explanation why PEO, which for long time has operated adequately with smaller equipment, should suddenly need station this magnitude. Actual presence and probable future large-scale support Phoumi forces by US without permission legal government would therefore immediately be known. Situation could easily be complicated by formal objection RLG or request withdraw PEO staff with which US would have to comply.

2. Other case is suggestion establish PEO teams battalion headquarters. This would obviously stimulate morale, insure better use US furnished supplies and contribute materially effectiveness whole operation. On other hand, presence these American personnel with Phoumi forces in locations which they had never before occupied and do not occupy with RLG would give clear evidence overt US support Phoumi, would certainly lead complications with already suspicious French and might be considered violation Geneva accords. Again would risk request by RLG for removal PEO.

This is kind of problem which will continuously arise. Ambassador's view is that unless legal basis for open support is provided (e.g., by successful coup as contemplated by King) we must limit ourselves to scale of support deliberately below military optimum in order comply with overriding consideration referred to above. In terms specific cases his judgment would be that they involve unacceptable political risks.

Ambassador Brown concurs foregoing.

Irwin position as follows:

I question the use of "overriding and determining" in above statement of understanding that "one consideration at all times overriding and determining, namely, to conduct support and supply operation in such manner as not place US in unfavorable light should Lao situation be brought UN." If this applied literally we do nothing for Phoumi and little for other anti-Communist forces in Laos. Our policy has been to support directly in moderate measure Phoumi and other anti-Communist forces. This policy is contrary to that of Souvanna, who is dedicated to obtaining agreement with Pathet Lao and, I believe, will oppose our aid to active anti-Pathet Lao forces. Examples of US actions to date are the movement of the Lopburi paratroopers to Pakse, continuance of MAP deliveries to Phoumi and payment of Phoumi forces [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. I believe US should establish a pattern and rhythm for support and supply of anti-PL forces of FAL in manner best calculated to control and least likely to

disturb political situation but at same time assuring a reasonably effective support and supply system. The support and supply operation should be conducted in such manner as to avoid to greatest degree possible consistent with reasonably effective support to the anti-Communist Lao forces the placing of the US in unfavorable light should Lao situation be brought UN. My point is that US can already be placed in unfavorable light. Although risk to date is relatively small, it will increase as we continue to aid Lao anti-Communist forces unless and until the political situation changes in Laos. Thus, since the US has already accepted an increasing risk and if US is going to continue its effort to save Laos, it should establish an effective mechanism to do so even though the mechanism constitutes, not the creation of the risk, but some increase in the risk.

Before discussing specific case I wish to enlarge on mechanism already agreed upon in Washington.

1. Establish political and military liaison officers at Savannakhet with instructions to control and guide Phoumi's political and military policies and plans.
2. Furnish military liaison officer with sufficient personnel to carry out his operational and logistic responsibilities. He and political officer should be instructed to keep these to a minimum consistent with an effective execution of his mission.
3. Both political and military liaison officers should be members of Ambassador's country team.
4. CINCPAC will carry out supply operation in accordance with his present directive.
5. Following guidance should be given Ambassador: Pattern and rhythm for support and supply of anti-Communist forces in Laos will be established in manner best calculated to control and least likely to disturb political situation, but at same time assuring reasonably effective support and supply system. Emphasis will be placed on conducting the support and supply operation in such manner as to avoid to greatest degree possible consistent with reasonably effective supply and support of anti-Communist Lao forces placing of US in unfavorable light should Lao situation be brought UN.

With respect to specific cases referred to by Secretary Parsons, I concur that proposed communication system should not be erected at this time at Savannakhet. However, it should be recognized that communication system at Savannakhet is very poor and that it may be desirable or even necessary to improve it in the future if Savannakhet becomes center from which other anti-Communist forces in Regions I and II as well as IV are supplied. Further, if events should occur that result in a new RLG, perhaps with Vientiane in revolt against the RLG established at Luang Prabang, quick availability of an adequate communication system will be essential. Radio eqipment is now boxed at Bangkok ready for shipment to Savannakhet. It would take approximately three days to deliver and put equipment into operation. A

compromise solution would be to erect in Savannakhet the radio equipment except for the antennae. This would pose some risk, but I believe it slight as the equipment will all be indoors. Advantage would be that immediate facilities would be available in case of need.

Likewise, I concur that PEO teams should not be assigned to battalion headquarters at present time. However, I can envisage circumstances arising at early date when this added risk might be worth taking. We should not automatically rule out this type of action, and field should be encouraged to make timely recommendations on all such actions that might advance the anti-Communist cause in Laos.

Difference between my view and that of Secretary Parsons and Ambassador Brown is one of emphasis. I believe it to be essential to create reasonably effective mechanism that can act and react quickly in confused situation that now exists and will doubtless continue to exist.

Admiral Riley concurs with Irwin.

Special mission has not found any other substantial point of difference relating to our policy in Laos within country team or between Ambassador and Washington or among members special mission.

Johnson

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430. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, October 16, 1960—11 p.m.

673. From Parsons.[2]

(A) In reflecting on talks in Laos with King, Souvanna and numerous others including Diplomatic Corps, I am impressed with degree to which possibility of our salvaging situation in Laos depends upon three factors:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1660. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated niact to Vientiane, priority to Saigon, Paris, London, Canberra, and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 839 from Bangkok, October 18, Irwin sent his own report. He stated that he agreed "with much of that Secretary Parsons said in Bangkok Embassy telegram 673," but he wanted to complement it with his own thoughts and recommendations. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. Acquiescence of Souvanna in our policy and actions at least until events frustrate or defeat him and he leaves office. At present we are acting on sufferance. For if Souvanna should request withdrawal of PEO or ask us desist support to Phoumi we would be hard-pressed to find a way to support Phoumi and anti-Communists in other regions.

2. Ability of anti-Communist elements to (A) regain control of RLG policy and action and (B) defeat greatly strengthened and now well-positioned PL. This involves preferably removal of Souvanna or at least surrounding and checkmating him as did Phoui and Savang in 1956–58.

3. Our capability to support anti-Communist elements without exposing ourselves to indictment in UN, splitting SEATO further on Laos and finding our Western allies, above all French and British, aligned against us.

(B) Comments on foregoing three factors:

1. Up to time I left Washington I do not think we realized to what degree Souvanna has it in his power to place us in absolutely impossible situation. His policy, however mistaken, is to conciliate PL; our policy is to have Laos oppose PL. As head of legally invested royal government which we acknowledge, he can demand that we cease interfering in Laos by support to declared rebels and by seeking to act and to have these rebels act upon a policy contrary to that of RLG. He could easily be goaded into demanding that we remove PEO which would mean we coud not support regions I, II, III and IV, and since we would not wish to support region V our support to Laos would really be at an end. Souvanna, out of natural caution (or weakness) and because I think he really wishes Laos to have US support, has not reached this point and I am hopeful that he will not. Nevertheless, he is aware we oppose his policy and are seeking to frustrate it. He is most conscious of his legitimacy and it must be presumed that he considers we are acting improperly. (He remarked caustically about setting up of military base in Pakse "for purposes unknown;" see Vientiane telegram 742[3] paragraph 13.) He sincerely believes that we and previous Lao governments were mistaken and unduly provocative in bringing in training personnel, etc.

In addition Souvanna feels he has some strong bargaining cards, namely anticipated Soviet aid offer. It is also consistent with his belief in need for policy of conciliation and infutility of military means to combat PL that he talks of cutting army and so reducing his support requirements (Vientiane telegram 742 paragraph 14). Souvanna also knows our Western allies are unenthusiastic over US policy and consider him Laos' only hope at present. French could even be conniving with him against us and are no doubt balancing their loyalty to us against their desire again to play major role in Laos.

[3] See footnote 2, Document 428.

2. It is sad commentary that only dynamic factor in Laos at present is Kong Le. His cries for peace among Lao, no corruption and neutrality have appeal and he is local hero. Equally sad is probability few units of fragmented ANL have will to fight. Those tested (in Phoumi's area) did not although better led they might. Most of my Lao contacts in Vientiane were doing little more than wring their hands. Inpeng said town was really under cover control of PL who steadily jailing or otherwise neutralizing once powerful Sananikones, Souvannavongs and other former pro-Western leaders.

In my view Department telegram 384[4] proposals or approximation thereof is still soundest line for us to take despite probable loss of Vientiane for time at least. It would legitimize us and Phoumi, offer means to check or ultimately defeat Souvanna and it is less likely to trigger all-out PL armed offensive or to dissipate our remaining ANL and other assets by premature commitment.

Only other positive plan if such it be is that so euphorically disclosed to us by King (Vientiane's 737 to Department).[5] I doubt that either in its political or military aspects there would be properly coordinated nationwide action and there is here again serious risk of losing assets piecemeal. Yet declarations against RLG in region I, possibly elsewhere, plus desertion of three of four more Cabinet Ministers could cause Souvanna to give up. If this type of action comes before Souvanna's asserted willingness to move to Luang Prabang is acted upon, it of course vitiates our hopes of restoring unity and legitimizing our position through Department telegram 384 line. On other hand, since if Souvanna resigns King could then pick another leader, unity and legitimacy of US action would ensue in this case too. In any event it is probably true that there is a growing disillusionment with Souvanna and fear of where situation is leading. Thus there is ground for welcoming and supporting any moves, even if imperfectly timed and executed, which fit pattern of King's remarks to us.

3. Under present circumstances our capability to support anti-Communist elements without exposing ourselves to potentially disastrous international consequences is limited. As set forth Bangkok telegram 668[6] we can establish guidelines but each proposal of support to Phoumi requires difficult ad hoc decision with result that for political reasons we must often do less than what is militarily desirable and even necessary. We are also handicapped by fact that under present circumstances we cannot carry Western allies along with us. British and French presented to us in Vientiane analysis their views why our policy of renewed hard line against PL could not succeed and pro-

[4] Document 421.
[5] Document 427.
[6] Document 429.

posed instead renewed effort help Souvanna without qualification (see Vientiane telegram 584.)[7] Ambassador Addis, who believes strongly Souvanna is only hope for Laos, admitted he differed with Souvanna on key point in that he, Addis, recognized ultimate need to use force against estimated 500 hard core of PL. As Admiral Riley pointed out, this 500 will never be conveniently isolated but will operate with whole mass of PL adherents. This seems to me to illustrate lack of realism in approach of our Western allies.

C. Present denial of budgetary support is untenable for more than very brief period for number of obvious reasons (Bangkok telegram 667)[8] unless we are to defeat by our own action our aims of supporting FAL, such as it is, and of preserving solid currency achieved through monetary reform. I greatly dislike prospect of having to pay all of troops in region V including second paras but if resumption budgetary support is deemed in our overall interest we should accept this. As I recall we paid two PL battalions in ANL after Vientiane agreements.

D. In light foregoing and associated telegrams, my conclusions therefore are:

1. We must find basis for resuming budgetary support, military and civil.

2. We must, if possible, remove Souvanna's present capability to destroy our policy at any moment by requesting removel of PEO and cessation of aid to Phoumi.

3. We must remove ourselves from our present untenable and exposed position of giving support to group declared rebels by legal government, in which at any moment we may be hailed defenseless before UN.

4. We must reconcile ourselves to fact that only over long haul can we build up anti-Communist forces to the point where they will have any capacity to restore pre-August 9 status.

E. As preliminary steps I recommend:

1. We agree at once on rationale to explain our activities in support of Phoumi. (See Bangkok telegram 670.)[9] Single newsman in Savannakhet or merely by direct questions elsewhere can precipitate revelation of our present highly inconsistent position.

2. We should improve our posture by seeking Souvanna's acceptance of our support for Phoumi against PL, difficult as this is. Ambassador Brown might be instructed to stress to Souvanna that we are

[7] This reference is in error; telgram 584, September 21, concerns an unrelated subject. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/9–2160)

[8] Dated October 15. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1560; included in the microfiche supplement)

[9] In telegram 670, October 16, Parsons stated that the "only tenable line" to explain U.S. support of Phoumi was that the United States was supporting all the FAL against the Pathet Lao. Parsons warned of the danger of exposure if the press inquired whether the United States had received approval from the RLG for support of Phoumi. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

anxious to keep Phoumi's forces in position to defend against the PL and that we believe this to be consistent with his own orders to his forces to resist PL attacks. We should say would like to give support through Vientiane but it is not possible with no supplies available there and supply system fragmented. We would insure that this support would not be used to attack the royal government, and would, of course, cease this support if there should be such an attack despite our efforts. Furthermore, we still believe that proposals made by Ambassador Brown (Department telegram 384) which envisaged Phoumi recognizing royal government and which Phoumi accepted unconditionally were best solution for unification of country. We would therefore urge him to give us prompt and favorable answer so that we could resume all our aid with greater hope of its being effective in strengthening country and giving him position of strength which he himself said he desired for his negotiations with PL.

I realize that there is risk that Souvanna will not go along with foregoing and might instead demand that we stop aid to Phoumi and other regions. However, he has power to do this anyway and with spate of current rumors about our support of Phoumi, plus prodding of newsmen (such as I experienced Friday), we could have request from Souvanna at any moment to cease and desist. Apart from this negative reason, it seems to me that there is good positive reason for taking risk of asking Souvanna because, if he consents, our strong support to all regions becomes possible and legitimate and will strengthen hands of those involved in movement revealed to us by King. Furthermore, we would no longer be liable to international censure through UN and would gain support in varying degrees of presently disapproving allies. Finally, if Souvanna refused to go along, we could make final last approach to King saying that RLG had asked us to stop support to regions to resist PL and that we looked to him as declared anti-Communist to ask us publicly to continue in this emergency.

Ambassador Brown concurs. Secretary Irwin and Admiral Riley have not had opportunity study this message yet.

Johnson

431. Editorial Note

On October 17 at 4 p.m., Ambassador Brown met with Souvanna Phouma in Vientiane on instructions from Parsons. (See *supra*) Brown described their conversation in detail in telegram 765 from Vientiane, October 17. At the end of the telegram, Brown summarized the situation as a result of the conversation and made five recommendations:

"A) Souvanna has asked officially for large-scale aid for First Region.

"B) He is agreeable direct US aid southern regions, provided Phoumi accepts authority legal govt.

"C) He is sending emissary to Phoumi to ask him again recognize his govt, but is prepared consider counter proposal. (This in opposition heavy PL propaganda against any negotiations or accommodation with Phoumi.)

"D) He has not closed door to our direct aid to south, but has asked us wait day or two to see what comes of his feeler to Phoumi. In this he is clearly trying keep pressure on Phoumi to accept his terms or something near them and still have door open for our support.

"E) We have shown him how he can get our military aid, but have not agreed to give it.

"I recommend:

"1) That in order maintain maximum bargaining power I be instructed tell Souvanna tomorrow October 18 that we want to help him to resist PL anywhere and specifically in First Region, that we can do so quickly, but that our concern is with whole country and we must have his agreement our helping resist PL in south as well.

"2) That if practicable, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] collect and load equipment PEO agrees required by Houmphan [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] for earliest delivery, supplies to be held pending Souvanna's reply to 1) above and our decision there.

"3) That we tell Phoumi that Souvanna is prepared consider counter-proposal and that he must make reasonable one in response Souvanna's feeler, perhaps along lines modified 384 with agreement drag out PL negotiations and assurance cut off if PL try go beyond implementation 1957 agreements or to get NLHX into govt. Should also insist anew on strict observance cease-fire by Vientiane forces, including Kong Le.

"4) That we continue analysis Phoumi and other plans and requirements pending arrival material Bangkok.

"5) That we tell Ouan and Houmphan (who now appear by their exchange of telegrams to have agreed cooperate against Pathet Lao) what we have told Souvanna in 1) above, but that he reluctant agree on direct supply south. We must be able to supply Phoumi legally if their joint effort against PL is to succeed. Hope this will press Souvanna agree our request in larger interest country.

"All members Country Team concur." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

The Department responded to these recommendations in telegrams 420 and 424 to Vientiane, October 17 and 18. The Department authorized Brown to tell Souvanna that the United States would assist all Lao forces in fighting the Pathet Lao, including Phoumi. As for recomendation 2, the Department informed Brown that such action was already being carried out. The Department preferred the following course of action on recommendation 3:

"We telling Phoumi he should dissolve his committee because this action would improve climate of relations among non-Communist elements and thus promote chances of reunification. Action should also restore some of Phoumi's prestige. No quid pro quo was suggested. Believe it would be preferable to tell Phoumi he should give a reasonable and constructive response to Souvanna's feeler, but it might be better avoid encouraging Phoumi make counter-proposals which would very probably lead to another extended, inconclusive exchange prolonging present division of non-Communist forces. The most important point is that we need Phoumi legitimized by removing the label of 'rebel'."

The Department agreed with recommendation 4, as long as the analysis did not interrupt the flow of matériel to Lao forces, includng Phoumi's, which were willing to fight the Pathet Lao. Recommendation 5 was approved as stated. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1760 and 751J.5–MSP/10–1760; both included in the microfiche supplement)

At 3:20 p.m., October 17, Assistant Secretary of Defense Irwin, Admiral Riley, and U.S. liaison officials to Savannakhet met with General Phoumi Nosavan and Prince Boun Oum at Ubon, Thailand. While the Americans encouraged Phoumi to join a new anti-Communist government and raised the problem of his rebel status, the thrust of their discussion was that the United States was prepared to support, at least secretly, a march on Vientiane and recapture of the government by Phoumi. (Telegram 686 from Vientiane, October 18; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

432. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 18, 1960—8:31 p.m.

425. *Policy Decision on US-Lao Relations.*

After reviewing the very helpful and constructive reports and recommendations from the Parsons' Mission, with special attention having been given to Bangkok's 668, Parts I and II,[2] 670[3] and 676,[4] there are set forth for the coordination and guidance of our efforts in the current Laos crisis the following principles:

Recent history in the United Nations, highlighted by our experiences in the Congo, require that we adopt an over-all policy in Laos which will not put us in the position of precipitating action in the UN with the United States as a defendant. We must remember that while Souvanna Phouma might not take this action there are others who would if they saw in it an opportunity to place the United States in a disadvantageous light. Our actions further must ensure that we are placed in the best defensive position possible if in spite of all caution we are brought to the United Nations to give account.

For reasons of expediency, therefore, we accept the inevitable of working with Souvanna Phouma as the constitutional and legally installed Prime Minister. This is necessary to maintain the facade of legality so cogently set forth in Mr. Parsons' report. This expedient may of course turn out to be a temporary one. Events could move in a direction yet unforeseen which would provide us with other alternatives than Souvanna Phouma.

While our course of action and desired conditions as set forth in Deptel 384 should be continued to be accepted as valid and basic goals, we obviously must accept certain inevitable slippage so far as the time factor is concerned. Flexibility will be required to meet exigencies as they progress.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1860. Top Secret; Priority. Drafted by Steeves, cleared with O'Donnell (DOD/ISA) in substance, and approved by Dillon. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC. This cable was initially presented to Merchant in the form of a memorandum from Steeves, October 16. (*Ibid.*, 611.51J/10–1660; included in the microfiche supplement) There are some differences in language between the memorandum and the cable.

[2] Document 429; it was transmitted in two parts.

[3] See footnote 8, Document 430.

[4] In telegram 676, October 16, Parsons in Bangkok cited intelligence reports that Souvanna had ordered the FAL commander at Luang Prabang to attack the Pathet Lao and was sending a special emissary to meet with Phoumi. If this were true, Parsons suggested that Brown see Souvanna and try to get him to accept U.S. support for Phoumi. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

It is fully recognized that operating through Souvanna Phouma or any other Prime Minister who espouses his stance is an expensive cover. The cost is considered acceptable in order to buy time and continue to have the opportunity to build up anti-communist strength within the forces while, at the same time, organizing rather elaborate and carefully worked out systems of guidance and controls to those FAL forces whose support is imperative. One of the most expensive parts inherent in this position is that Kong Le and his troops will have to be paid inasmuch as they seem to be inseparable legally. Pay that has been arranged through advances from the National Bank of Laos must be redeemed by American dollars in any event.

The above expedient course of action will probably be acceptable to Phoumi as he is undoubtedly convinced that we intend to protect him and supply him, although this operation will of necessity have to be carried out under very strict control while maintaining military and political advice for him.

A reasonable assumption is that with the semblance of normalcy restored in our relations with the Prime Minister, he will then be no more decisive in the action available to him against us than he is against the Pathet Lao or anyone else with whom he finds himself in partial conflict. For his own purposes (and by character) Souvanna Phouma is not likely to abrogate our agreement with the RLG unilaterally or to take us to the United Nations even though he is aware of considerable irregularity and outflanking.

This line of action has the additional merit of consistency and continuity in the eyes of our allies, such as the British, French and Australians. This is important in gaining the maximum support from them. The break in the ranks as exhibited by the French in their recent advice to Souvanna Phouma in Vientiane is unfortunate. Nevertheless, the point is valid in maintaining the highest degree of solidarity possible.

Of great importance is the fact that this course of action keeps us in the act and maintains our legitimate presence in Laos. To impose rigid demands and to pull out if they are not met would at this juncture abdicate the field to the Russians. In our absence their intrusion into the vacuum would be greatly facilitated. In conformity with this concept and in keeping with the assumptions as set forth above, the following tasks seem appropriate:

1. Continue to press Souvanna Phouma to extricate himself from the influence of Kong Le. This to be done either by removal of the capital to the royal capital in Luang Prabang or to get Kong Le and his influence out of Vientiane.

2. If the Prime Minister will not take the necessary steps to disassociate himself from Kong Le's baneful influence, to take whatever feasible steps present themselves to encourage his replacement in favor of another legally appointed Prime Minister.

3. To remove as much of the treasury from Vientiane as possible in order that all of the kip deposits are not in one area. If a treasury is established in Luang Prabang we at least have two sources from which to initiate payments.

4. Continue our efforts to control or neutralize Kong Le and as a minimum remove him from Vientiane.

5. Exert maximum pressure to slow down and if possible to sabotage current negotiations with the Pathet Lao to prevent Souvanna Phouma from conceding in unequal negotiations that which we try to protect in the strengthening of the anti-communist forces. In this connection Souvanna Phouma has put himself in a position with respect to these negotiations which we can discreetly exploit. He has set forth some rather difficult to accept demands. We should continue to pressure him to maintain these demands constantly reminding him that if he will but accept our cooperation we can provide him with the means to strengthen his position.

6. Phoumi should take action voluntarily to dissolve his so-called "Revolutionary Committee". It serves no purpose in practice. Furthermore, it has the great disadvantage of making him legally a "rebel" and therefore, under a strict interpretation, if Souvanna Phouma so wishes, places him outside the boundaries of legitimate support.

Authorized action:

1. In conformity with the concepts above the temporary embargo resulting from the suspension of certain categories of aid to Laos should now be lifted. Longer delay involves us in the tortuous techniques of reauthorization if the resumption does not take place while it can be interpreted as a temporary suspension while certain irregularities were ironed out. While the expenditure of aid funds for projects concerning which we have any question can always be introduced, the continuance of total blockage to achieve concessions is rapidly reaching the point of diminishing returns.

2. Part and parcel of the lifting of the embargo must be the supply and pay for FAL elements such as Savannakhet as well as the maintenance of the strength of any other portions of the anti-communist FAL within the general concept of 384. We should accept the calculated risk involved in the maintenance of this strength but the rhythm and volume of supply and in some instances the techniques to be followed are all-important. In areas where we have to work tactfully with the Prime Minister to gain his acceptance, these activities must be kept within reasonable bounds. The control point for these activities must be Embassy Vientiane where the political delicacies can be assessed. Guidance on timing and magnitude must come from the Embassy. In carrying out CINCPAC's responsibility in keeping with the general concept of 384 CINCPAC and Embassy will work closely together. Supplies not transiting Vientiane will always be checked for delivery

with the Embassy before being outshipped from Bangkok. Matters requiring resolution by Washington which cannot be resolved in this fashion will be referred there for decision.

Herter

VI. CIVIL WAR IN LAOS, OCTOBER 19-DECEMBER 31, 1960

433. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 19, 1960—8:14 p.m.

428. Ref Vientiane's 787.[2] Conditions accepted. Authorize resumption all aid.[3] Purpose of US aid not to attack RLG but to preserve independence and territorial integrity of Laos. US has not sought detach first region from its loyalty to RLG. Objective of US is unity of country and Army.

While Souvanna's concession first ray light for some time in breaking seeming impasse we recognize our acceptance these conditions does not leave all outstanding questions answered.

Appropriate disposition of Kong Le, maintenance of stiff resistance to Pathet Lao such as surrendering of Sam Neua and observance cease fire all come to mind as position we want him to stand on. His actions and attitude in immediate future are all important if he is to create the necessary confidence which by his past attitude has been severely shaken to say least.

Specific instructions on implementation preceding paragraph will follow.[4]

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/10-1960. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman, cleared with SEA and DOD/ISA, and approved by Steeves. Repeated niact to Bangkok, to Saigon, Phnom Penh, and priority to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 787, October 19, Brown reported that Souvanna agreed to the U.S. proposal to supply all FAL pay and supplies directly, with two conditions: the aid would not be used against the RLG and the United States would not try to detach the First Region from loyalty to him. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5-MSP/10-1960; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 796 from Vientiane, October 20, Brown reported he had informed Souvanna that aid would be resumed. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/10-2060; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Apparent reference to Document 435.

434. Memorandum of Discussion at the 464th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 20, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1–3. Secretary of State Herter presided at the meeting.]

4. U.S. Policy Toward Laos (NSC 6012)[2]

Mr. Dulles began his briefing on Laos by pointing out that many of the developments there related to U.S. actions on which he assumed the Secretary of State would wish to report. The picture in Laos today was better than a week ago. Souvanna Phouma had moved a little away from insisting on an early agreement with the Pathet Lao. We do not know whether the Soviet Ambassador made any offers to Souvanna Phouma in his initial meeting but we believe that the meeting was exploratory. The King had not signed the new Soviet Ambassador's accreditation papers but probably will. Meanwhile there was a slight hope that the King, Souvanna Phouma, and Phoumi could be brought together. Mr. Dulles observed that Mr. Parsons and Mr. Irwin had done a fine job and had moved the situation along.

Secretary Herter called on Secretary Dillon to bring the Council up to date on latest U.S. actions. Mr. Dillon indicated he would report on the latest situation rather than on the involutions that had occurred. The fundamental problem was that the person with the clear-cut anti-Communist position, Phoumi, had unfortunately set up a revolutionary regime which made him a rebel. He had, in fact, been declared a rebel by the government. This made it politically very difficult for us to give him support. We could not do so to an extent where the government would make an appeal to the UN based upon U.S. interference. We could not count on the support of anyone in the UN in such a situation. We would be in a position like that of the Russians on the Congo, but with no Guineas or Ghanas to back us up.

We were interested in two things in the current situation. One was to get a unified government so that we could strongly support Phoumi legally. The second was to work for disengagement of the Laos Government from its negotiations with the Pathet Lao. We had doubts about Souvanna but he was the government. We had decided to resume budgetary aid to all of Laos even though this puts us in the position of paying Kong Le's troops. They had been paid by withdrawals from the central bank. We would have to make up these withdrawals anyway as long as we were going to give assistance to Laos. We want to ensure that Souvanna Phouma is put in a position where he

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Johnson on October 24.

[2] Document 65.

would not want to risk breaking off relations with us or creating trouble in the UN. This would make it possible for us to take greater risks in sending matériel to Phoumi.

Originally, we had suggested, Secretary Dillon continued, that Souvanna Phouma move to Luang Prabang and stop his negotiations with the Pathet Lao. This had not yet occurred. However, Souvanna Phouma had told us that he concurs in our view that the primary job is to fight the Pathet Lao. He has said that the U.S. can send in supplies directly to any region of Laos, including supplies to Phoumi in the south. We are asking Phoumi to dissolve his revolutionary regime. It serves no purpose; no one has accepted it. If he gets rid of the revolutionary regime, Phoumi can act as he wishes to but he will no longer be a rebel.

Secretary Dillon went on to state that the region around Luang Prabang wished to fight the Pathet Lao. It was not clear, however, whether they wished to fight the Pathet Lao with Phoumi, with Souvanna Phouma, or on their own. The U.S. was sending supplies to the area, however. Secretary Dillon noted that General Ouane had recently gone to Luang Prabang where he had resigned. Souvanna Phouma had asked him to withdraw his resignation. General Ouane had refused to withdraw his resignation but had stated he would accept Souvanna Phouma's refusal to accept his resignation. Mr. Dulles noted that it was not clear whether General Ouane's original resignation had included both his position as Chief of Staff and his position as Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Dillon stated that in his negotiations with the Pathet Lao, Souvanna Phouma had stuck closer than we had expected to his original terms. There was an official report that the Pathet Lao had agreed to withdraw from Sam Neua. We would have to wait to see whether this withdrawal actually took place. Souvanna Phouma had also sent an emissary to Phoumi; this was the first time in some time that such contact had been established. Souvanna Phouma was seeking some arrangement to unify the country. All that Souvanna Phouma was asking now was that Phoumi not fight against him; that he accept the Souvanna Phouma government. Otherwise, he would be free to do what he wished to do. In response to a question from Secretary Dillon, Mr. Dulles stated that Kong Le had temporarily disappeared but had now re-appeared. It looked as though Kong Le was slipping a bit. Secretary Dillon noted that the significance of the fifteen day jail term which had been put in Kong Le's dossier was the fact that it had been publicly announced.[2] This announcement had meant some

[2] On October 18, Souvanna told foreign newsmen that he had punished Kong Le with 15 day "arrest" for the unauthorized demonstration by the paratroopers of the 2nd Battalion upon the arrival of the Soviet Ambassador to Vientiane, October 13. Kong Le's "arrest" did not involve confinement of any kind. The Embassy commented that the

Continued

loss of face for Kong Le. There was some feeling against him among his own troops. If these troops now begin to waver, the situation in Laos was returning to normal, for these troops had been the only element that had stayed on course heretofore. Mr. Dulles noted that Phoumi had agreed to dissolve his revolutionary regime if he could be given some other status; otherwise he would have no status. He was asking something from the King.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed recent developments with regard to the situation in Laos.

[Here follows item 5.]

Robert H. Johnson

publicity of this action was probably as significant as the administrative punishment itself. (Telegram 773 from Vientiane, October 18; Department of State, Central Files, 751J.551/10-1860)

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435. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 22, 1960—4:45 p.m.

444. Joint State/Defense message. Bangkok's 716.[2] While agree that for first time in many weeks there are indications some forward progress being made toward stabilization situation, we fearful that this could at any moment be upset either by increased Kong Le group control over Souvanna's conduct of negotiations with Pathet Lao or by Kong Le group move to take over government by another coup. Our use here of term Kong Le group is intended to encompass whole ominous combination of Kong Le and his second paratroop battalion working in conjunction with Quinim and Pathet Lao.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–3160. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Usher and Colonel McCrea of the Department of Defense and cleared by SEA and Steeves. Repeated to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 716, October 22, Brown gave the Department of State a cautiously optimistic assessment of the situation in Laos based on recent developments. Brown recommended that the United States try to exploit the improving situation so as to permit U.S. support to all factions resisting the Pathet Lao. To this end, Brown suggested that he seek an audience with King Savang. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–2160; included in the microfiche supplement)

Since it now appears Souvanna does not intend move government to Luang Prabang it becomes doubly important eliminate Kong Le influence Vientiane.

We realize you may well consider it inadvisable make further démarche to Souvanna just now, while availing ourselves his agreement to supply all elements FAL. However, believe we must ask you at earliest date to approach Souvanna to impress upon him grave seriousness of this matter.

Meanwhile, we have been studying various possible approaches to problem of reducing or eliminating the Kong Le threat. Would appreciate your early reactions and recommendations on each of following possibilities:

A. Force (by RLG)

1. *Approach*

a. Obviously to advantage of RLG to make clear Souvanna is master in his own house.

b. Would do much to reassure Ouan, Houmphan and Savannakhet forces that Souvanna is acting in what all consider to be best interests of Laos.

c. US Govt. is in difficult position of justifying aid to RLG as long as the image of Kong Le domination remains. (Amb. has previously pointed out circumstances leading to this widespread conclusion. Purely nominal nature of Kong Le "arrest" and apparent dispatch of new military attachés without reference to Min. of Defense only reinforce this image.)

d. No government can be expected to function well in capital which lives in state of apprehension.

e. Clear that King mistrusts Kong Le.

f. Therefore apparent Souvanna must apply whatever force is necessary to establish himself as free of coercion by a junior officer.

g. Fortunately, careful planning for use of resources at his disposal now permits him to act from a position of strength.

2. *Technique*

a. Companies of 2nd para. battalion must be placed under officers loyal to Ouan, Houmphan or Phoumi and ordered to separate posts well away from Vientiane.

b. Kong Le and Lt. Duane must be ordered out of country—to school or other mission in non-Communist country.

c. If Kong Le refused to accept above orders, as seems probable, Souvanna must order all troops loyal to RLG to cooperate in taking control of Vientiane, and must appeal to the personnel of the 2nd para. battalion not to oppose government they were instrumental in instituting.

3. *Execution*

a. Prior to embarking upon above course agreement must be obtained in secrecy for use of forces loyal to Ouan, Houmphan and Phoumi which can be spared from present locations to be rapidly concentrated with use of contract and Laos aircraft to move into Vientiane and take over control—attacking 2nd para. battalion only if unable to persuade them not to resist. Pathet Lao forces can be expected to fight and to try to get 2nd para. battalion to fight. PL must be ruthlessly dealt with if they do this. If they should not, those who do not flee must be rounded up as part of measures for control of Vientiane.

b. Careful planning and timing are essence of execution, plan should first be drawn by CHPEO, closely guarded and concurrence by all necessary echelons sought in manner and with timing best calculated by Country Team to secure results.

4. *Timing*

a. Considered essential not to upset precarious arrangement under which we now supplying anti-Communist forces. Execution should therefore be planned to take advantage of maximum input of material which can be effectively utilized in operations.

b. On other hand considered of vital importance to be rid of Kong Le influence as soon as practicable. Planning should therefore be undertaken at once at aim of implementing as soon as objective of above paragraph is realized.

B. Some additional ideas that might be considered for implementation by Country Team are as follows:

1. *Use of carrot rather than stick.* Presumably this would not be successful in view Kong Le's reported dedication to pro-Commie course ([*document number not declassified*]).[3]

2. *Persuasion.* Attempt direct approach to him to persuade him that his aims can be accomplished by loyalty to new government and that he is being duped by Communist elements in league with Pathet Lao. Recognize this not likely to produce results but possibly could be used in conjunction with other actions to partly neutralize or at least confuse him.

Note: This line of action could of course be undertaken at any time without upsetting present delicate balance of agreement with Souvanna.

3. *Maneuver.* Seek to render his position harmless. There are several possible ways which might be pursued but now [*none*?] appears to offer anything except hope:

[3] Not found.

a. Convince a substantial portion of his battalion that Kong Le is being used by the Communists.

b. Continue to seek statements and other evidence of support for strong line against PL by all other FAL units with intention of demonstrating isolation of 2nd para. battalion.

c. Assigning substantial portion of battalion out of Vientiane on one or another pretext, and gradually moving in a sufficient number of troops loyal to Ouan, Houmphan and/or Phoumi so as to negate apparent control of capital by 2nd para. battalion.

4. Seek to get strong and united appeal from all respected FAL commanders to the effect that although original motives of 2nd para. battalion were understandable, they have now been led astray and are hurting their country and the FAL.

5. Gradual break-up of 2nd para. battalion by piecemeal movement of companies to other areas to meet requirements of RLG.

Might be noted here that it is continuing role of Kong Le and 2nd para. battalion in prolonging Lao crisis and endangering US position and objectives there which has caused us reconsider our position on US pay for Kong Le troops. We stand in very vulnerable position in this issue here and it is for that reason we have decided we must pursue line indicated para 2 Deptel 442.[4]

Herter

[4] In this paragraph of telegram 442 to Vientiane, October 21, the Department of State authorized the Embassy to inform Souvanna that while it was within the sovereign right of the Royal Lao Government to pay Kong Le's 2d Battalion, it was equally within the sovereign right of the United States to decline to reimburse the government for payment of forces cooperating with the Pathet Lao. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5-MSP/10-2160)

436. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 22, 1960—4:40 p.m.

445. CINCPAC POLAD. Pass Parsons. Reur 716 from Bangkok.[2] Department agrees with summation set forth reftel that although situation tenuous, obviously lacking many attributes stability and cohe-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10-2260. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Steeves, cleared with SEA, and approved by Cleveland. Repeated priority to Bangkok and to CINCPAC.

[2] See footnote 2, *supra*.

siveness that at least we have for first time in many weeks basis upon which take next forward steps. Most important asset which accrues to us is of course that as long as this holds together we operate within framework of legality.

We endorse idea of seeking early audience with King. Presume Holt's 806 refers to tentative appointment Tuesday.[3] In addition discussing with King situation Region One and again rehearsing obvious advantages allow preparations there progress under canopy of legality you should also point out to him that should current and tenuous relationships with Souvanna Phouma emerge as basis upon which we can continue to work, it does buy time. (FYI. As you are well aware Washington circles are not very sanguine of Souvanna ever really serving our objectives.) We should emphasize to King our continuing support Souvanna Phouma can only be effective if our agreements with him hold firm and he demonstrates by action that he is sincere. These of course include unimpeded flow pay and supplies to FAL upon whom burden must fall of protecting integrity of country and his enforcement his pre-conditions in negotiating with PL.

At this juncture may be well remind King while we were of opinion, and so expressed to His Majesty, only few days ago our doubts concerning Souvanna Phouma's willingness or ability carry out these responsibilities effectively that we have continued search for formula in which we can work with Souvanna Phouma largely because King himself saw no alternative, was not willing use extraordinary means to relieve Souvanna Phouma of his responsibilities.

Will leave your discretion how fully you discuss following point with King but in our viewpoint next most urgent task to be performed is solution of Kong Le problem. No program has fighting chance success that does not have within it acceptance of fact Kong Le influence must be removed from scene in order emancipate administrative capital, allowing us work with Souvanna Phouma in an atmosphere freedom. (In this connection London's 1920 repeated you 33[4] reflects a UK view which in our opinion is devoid realism and is reflection of completely erroneous assessment Kong Le. You may further be interested that French here Washington at least have now accepted our view Kong Le definitely collaborating with PL.) Because of paramount importance to entire prospect success of adopting concrete plan for

[3] Telegram 806, October 21, concerned plans for Brown's audience with King Savang on Tuesday, October 25. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2160)

[4] In this telegram, October 21, the Embassy in London characterized the British view of Kong Le as not "in cahoots with or under the thumb of Pathet Lao," but as a supporter of Souvanna and a neutral Laos free of Pathet Lao domination. U.S. support for Phoumi and the CDNI could, in the British view, drive Kong Le into the Pathet Lao camp. (*Ibid.*, included in the microfiche supplement)

handling Kong Le there being sent you simultaneously a plan setting forth alternate courses of action. We would like country team's evaluations and comments on this at earliest possible moment.

Herter

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437. Telegram From the Consulate General at Hong Kong to the Department of State[1]

Hong Kong, October 22, 1960—2 p.m.

777. Department pass Defense. CINCPAC for POLAD. From Irwin. Re Vientiane's 771,[2] 787 and 796[3] to Department, Deptels 425 and 428[4] to Vientiane and cable from Brown to Department draft of which Parsons and I concurred in prior to departure from Bangkok on October 21.[5]

Although in agreement with actions being taken with Souvanna Phouma in accordance references and believe Ambassador Brown should be congratulated on effective handling to say the least confused situation, believe desirability of solving awkward political position of US should not obscure other aspects of situation.

First: Course of action approved in references in effect suspends course of action proposed in Deptel 384.[6] Souvanna Phouma will keep government in Vientiane at least for time being and will continue negotiations with PL assuming PL doesn't put forward impossible conditions.

Second: Souvanna Phouma wishes and I believe if at all possible intends to reach agreement with Pathet Lao and hopes to do so on basis of 1957 agreement. Revival of 1957 agreement now will have different repercussions and results than in 1957 if for no other reason than PL is stronger and has experience of what happened to NLHX as result of execution of 1957 agreement. However, he believes this type

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2260. Top Secret, Limit Distribution. Repeated to Vientiane, Saigon, Bangkok, London, Paris, Canberra, and CINCPAC.

[2] In telegram 771, October 18, Brown reported a conversation of that same day with Souvanna in which they discussed the Pathet Lao threat and the U.S. wish to supply all Lao forces willing to fight the Pathet Lao. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–1860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnotes 2 and 3, Document 433.

[4] Documents 432 and 433.

[5] Apparent reference to telegram 716 from Bangkok; see footnote 2, Document 435.

[6] Document 421.

agreement with PL will bring peace to his country and that if he fails resign or is removed the result will be war. But it does not follow that if Souvanna Phouma reaches agreement with PL that peace will follow, except peace of continued effort by PL to take over government from within, or that US interests will be served.

Third: In order to achieve his policy Souvanna Phouma must hold his government together. This means he must retain support even though lukewarm of first region. Vientiane's 771 cites Souvanna Phouma as stating first region "absolutely indispensable" to him. With it he can "talk strongly to PL" and break off talks if PL insists on going "beyond frame which he had set". We do not know what "frame" he had set for negotiations only that he has told us 1957 agreement. He has also said that 1957 agreement was not fully carried out although I believe US thinks RLG did carry it out. Point is we do not know how far he will go either voluntarily or under PL pressure.

Fourth: Anti-government sentiment exists in first region as shown by Ouan in Luang Prabang and his attempted resignation, by Houmphan's anti-PL view, action against PL and communication with Phoumi and by King's talk with our group. Souvanna Phouma is well aware of this and believes US has influence on course of first region. See his request in reference Vientiane 787 to Ambassador Brown that US not seek detach first region from his government. Thus while we are using Souvanna Phouma to solve our awkward political situation, Souvanna Phouma is using us to keep his government together and permit his negotiations with PL to continue. Problem is not to let his use of us permit him to achieve a policy contrary to US interests and which it might be in power of US to affect if we wish.

Fifth: We should recognize Phoumi's contribution to preservation of an anti-Communist base in Laos. Without Phoumi it is doubtful if first region would be able to take stand it can today. I realize that if Phoumi had joined Souvanna Phouma's government he might have been able to hold the government to a reasonably firm line with PL. However, this is not certain given Souvanna Phouma's policy of negotiation and Kong Le's seeming power position in Vientiane. In any case if Phoumi had not remained staunchly anti-Communist US ability to exert pressure on Souvanna Phouma in my opinion would have been greatly weakened. Consequently although Phoumi may have faults he is extremely important today to the success of US policy. We should make every effort to control him and we should keep faith with him and support him not to take over the government but eventually to be an important part of any new government. In our meeting I told him that if he cooperated with US and followed the guidance and counsel of Jantzen and Brownfield the US would support him. I think that is an obligation, a responsibility and an opportunity of the US.

Sixth: Souvanna Phouma has announced that the PL has accepted two of his three pre-negotiation conditions:

One, that they would accept a supervised truce. Parsons conjectured on disagreeable thought that this could present opportunity to PL to press for reestablishment of ICC.

Two, that RLG civil control would be restablished in Samneua.

On third condition, the rearming of FAL units in Samneua by PL who had disarmed them, Souvanna Phouma said something to the effect that the FAL units would be rearmed but didn't specify by whom. New course of action helps Souvanna Phouma keep government alive, keep it in Vientiane and carry on negotiations with PL.

Seventh: If Souvanna Phouma should fail resign or be removed tempo of PL and DRV attacks will increase substantially. The US must be prepared for this eventually and should use time, which may be short, gained as result of working agreement with Souvanna Phouma to strengthen Phoumian and other anti-Communist forces. PL have increased in strength, have deployed all over country, witness the ring around Vientine and capability to attack in other four regions. Doubtless PL will also use "time" to strengthen their position politically and militarily.

Comment: Based on relations and above seven points I think that Souvanna Phouma's using of us and our using of him (see fourth point above) is fair exchange only on short-term basis. Advantages are that US support to Phoumi and others is legalized, that time is gained to strengthen anti-Communist FAL and to seek a better political alignment either in or as successor to present RLG and that some, though questionable how much, possibility is offered to lessen Kong Le influence and power and thus regain Vientiane without military action. Disadvantage (1) is use to which Souvanna Phouma might be able to put this breathing spell in order to advance a policy contrary to US interests and the time it gives to PL to strengthen themselves politically and militarily. It is by weighing these advantages and disadvantages that I conclude course of action outlined in references is desirable but on a short-term basis. Further that it is advantageous only if we are able to strengthen Phoumi, Houmphan and other anti-Communist FAL. This to my mind calls for more than just matériel. It calls for the planning and guidance which Jantzen and Brownfield can give Phoumi to help him consolidate his political and military position in the third and fourth regions and strengthen him and the anti-Communist forces in the second region and which PEO [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] can give to Ouane and Houmphan in first region, all of course under supervision of Embassy Vientiane.

Two courses of action have recently been open to US. One, the course of action decided upon in references, and two, urging first region to declare against Souvanna Phouma government and to join

forces with Phoumi in the hope of altering the character of or bringing down Souvanna Phouma government. If course one should result in trend unfavorable to US interests, we should not hesitate to attempt course two. With either course I believe that US will be in better position than situation which existed at time decision made to send Parsons mission to SEA.

Parsons' comments: I hope Department will study Secretary Irwin's excellent message with great care as it sets Laos problem in most useful perspective. While I agree on almost every point I would add to last thought we should use time gained not only to strengthen non-Communist FAL but to encourage and strengthen politically those in Vientiane and elsewhere who would restrain Souvanna from fatal concessions. More generally speaking I think it difficult among quicksands that beset course of Laos events to foretell in advance whether any particular alternative such as course two in final paragraph will be best one for us when moment of decision arrives.

I agree, however, that we do now have a second string to our bow and since Souvanna must know of it we have added leverage. It also seems clearer that he does not want to break with us, at least not now.

Holmes

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438. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, October 27, 1960—9 p.m.

835. Ref Bangkok's 735, 745 and 746 to Dept.[2] Propose send Corcoran back Savannakhet with following instructions upon receipt Dept's approval which hereby requested:[3]

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2760. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated niact to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In these telegrams, October 25, 26, and 26, respectively, Thomas Corcoran, on temporary assignment from CINCPAC POLAD, reported on a trip he made to Savannakhet, October 24–26, and his discussions with Phoumi, Boun Oum, and the rest of the Revolutionary Committee. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/10–2560, 751J.00/10–2660, and 751J.00/10–2660, respectively; all included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 464 to Vientiane, October 28, the Department of State concurred in the sense of these instructions, but instructed Corcoran to deliver his remarks in "a more amicable manner." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/10–2760; included in the microfiche supplement)

1. Phoumi was advised by Sec Irwin and Adm Riley that US would support him in effort maintain integrity FAL and defend against PL on condition and only on condition he followed US advice. To this he fully agreed (Bangkok's 686 to Dept).[4] He should be held to this agreement. We cannot afford allow ourselves get in position where he can disregard or hedge on our advice and still continue get our support.

2. Because of circumstance which you admirably explained Phoumi, we are obliged furnish supplies to different regions independently, according their needs for best defense country. Chief PEO and Amb Vientiane are judges these requirements and tempo their supply, not Phoumi. He is not overall commander anti-Communist operation throughout country. You should make these points unmistakably clear to him.

3. You should not allow yourself get in position arguing with Phoumi as to motives and capabilities Ouan, Souvanna or others, or bargaining with him as to conditions our support his effort in south or those of others elsewhere.

4. After establishing foregoing points, you may tell him that he has been treated more than generously in comparison with First Region. (Will give Corcoran details tomorrow.) He has been provided with two hundred fully equipped paras from Erawan despite RLG request send them elsewhere. He has been sent technical personnel and supplies necessary maintain and make his aircraft airworthy. MAP supplies being furnished southern regions according same criterion their needs as others. If he is sincere desiring combat PL he should applaud rather than criticize dropping supplies to northern troops actually attacking PL.

5. You may tell Phoumi neither Emb Vientiane including CH/PEO nor Sec Irwin nor Amb Riley have the slightest doubt genuineness anti-Communism Houmphan. We convinced Ouan feels same, also Kouprasith.

6. As far as Seno is concerned, he should consider himself fortunate Seno base available at all for operation supplying Second, Third and Fourth Regions, and must realize the delicate international problem involved in the use Seno for these purposes.

7. On pay, we perfectly willing accept normal peacetime procedures, which only legal way can and must operate. Vientiane paymaster will bring down Sept pay in usual manner. By same token, Phoumi must follow normal peacetime procedures, by sending documentation for October pay to Vientiane so that money can be prepared and brought down by Vientiane paymaster.

[4] See Document 431.

8. You should advise Phoumi King unwilling publicly acknowledge statement loyalty for reasons given Embtels 824 and 825 to Department[5] but that King agrees committee should be dissolved if status dismissed officers and civilians restored. Continued existence committee hampers US position internationally and consequently our capacity help Phoumi. Absence any sort of accord between north and south frustrates objectives US policy. (Bangkok's 716 to Dept[6] approved by Dept's 445 to Vientiane.[7])

Only possibility we see of break in impasse reflected Bangkok's 735 and Embtel 829[8] to Dept is dissolution committee. In my view, this would give chance beginning restoration some form north-south and FAL unity in face enemy which so desperately needed. (Bangkok's 676 to Dept.)[9]

Souvanna has agreed US support Phoumi southern regions despite Phoumi's rebel status. Next move is up to Phoumi to extricate himself from the status, so as enable US continue its support without running grave international risks and being dependent on Souvanna's permission and to make possible beginning unification without which his country cannot long survive in independence.

9. You may advise Phoumi that if and when he agrees dissolve committee and before announcement I will endeavor obtain Souvanna's agreement withdrawal proposed ordinance dismissing him, Bounleuth and other officers from Army and officials from their positions.

10. FYI: There are increasing straws in the wind here in Vientiane indicating stiffening resistance [to] PL on part Souvanna and other groups on which we should endeavor capitalize. End FYI.

11. So far as Phoumi's military activities are concerned, he must be made to follow Riley's advice (Bangkok's 686 to Dept, paras 5 and 7) and not think of doing anything more until this achieved.

12. I realize this difficult assignment, but unless we display utmost firmness in making Phoumi comply with his promise be guided by our policy, we will completely lose control. The slightest give on our part will constitute surrender, given Phoumi's temperament. He is

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[5] Telegram 824, October 25, contains an account of the discussion between Brown and King Savang on October 25. In telegram 825, also October 25, Brown reported more specifically on the King's unwillingness to accede to Phoumi's request for a public Royal recognition of his loyalty in return for dissolution of the Revolutionary Committee. (Both Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2560; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] See footnote 2, Document 435.

[7] Document 436.

[8] In telegram 829, October 26, Brown reported that Souvanna said that he had no intention of negotiating further with Phoumi who had rebuffed all his attempts to reach an accommodation. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/10–2660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[9] See footnote 4, Document 432.

already wriggling hard on the hook; e.g., his letter to Sarit.[10] If he gets off we are in untenable position and delicately poised applecart in Laos will certainly be upset.

13. In view Phoumi letter to Sarit, Ambassador Johnson may wish consider telling Sarit position we take with Phoumi these issues and reasons therefor.

Brown

[10] Not further identified.

439. Editorial Note

At a meeting at the Pentagon beginning at 11 a.m. on October 28, representatives of the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Department of Defense conferred on Laos. The first topic they discussed was a memorandum prepared by Assistant Secretary of Defense Irwin proposing four courses of action to improve the military capability of anti-Communist forces in Laos. Irwin's memorandum called for: 1) a speed-up of delivery of supplies to Phoumi and the Lao Armed Forces in Military Region 1; 2) assistance to Phoumi's forces in regrouping, reorganization, and training; 3) help for Phoumi in military and political planning, and 4) stationing of PEO personnel as Lao military advisers at the battalion level. (Memorandum from Irwin to Gates, October 28; Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD Files: FRC 64 A 2093, Laos 091; included in the microfiche supplement)

Under Secretary of State Merchant made two comments on Irwin's memorandum. First, he asked the representatives at the meeting to remember that it was U.S. policy to achieve a political settlement in Laos without a civil war. Second, Merchant agreed with Irwin's first three points, but not the last. U.S. advisers at the battalion level, Merchant stated, risked the threat of "volunteers" from North Vietnam and worldwide damage to U.S. interests should their role be made public. There was general disagreement by the participants along agency lines whether or not the Lao wanted U.S. advisers. The disagreement then moved to the most basic issue: whether the United States should work through Phoumi or Souvanna Phouma and who was more trustworthy.

The discussion returned to the issue of U.S. advisers at the battalion level. Assistant Secretary Parsons suggested that members of the Royal Thai Police Aerial Resupply Unit (PARUs) should be used as advisers in Laos. Merchant agreed that the PARUs were preferable to U.S. officers, but suggested that this was an issue for the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense to decide.

The group then discussed a draft of telegram 466, *infra*. Parsons again raised the need for a political settlement in Laos and suggested that the draft telegram provided a legal way to support Lao anti-Communists. Irwin thought the action proposed in the draft was "excellent." Asked what would be Kong Le's and the Pathet Lao's response to the proposed government, and how would the United States react, Parsons suggested that if Kong Le and the Pathet Lao attacked with North Vietnamese support, the United States would use SEATO and the United Nations. Parsons also raised the possibility of unilateral U.S. action. Merchant summarized the sense of the meeting by stating that there was agreement on the course of action in the draft and that the Departments of State and Defense would take a hard look at the problem of battalion advisers. (Memorandum of discussion at the State–JCS meeting, October 28; Department of State, State–JCS Meetings: Lot 70 D 328; included in the microfiche supplement)

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440. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, October 28, 1960—10:26 p.m.

466. As pointed out by Secretary Irwin (Hong Kong 777)[2] our problem re Souvanna Phouma is not to let his use of us permit him to achieve a policy contrary to US interests, while we are trying use Souvanna to solve our awkward political situation. Events of past few days indicate that Souvanna's usefulness in achieving essential US objectives is about at an end and that his use of us can be very damaging to those objectives. We especially fear that nature of Souvanna's position vis-à-vis PL and Kong Le on the one hand and Phoumi forces on the other is creating situation in which will of FAL to resist PL attacks can be fatally undermined. This especially true if such

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2860. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Usher, cleared with SEA, G, and Merchant in substance, and approved by Parsons. Repeated priority to Bangkok and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 437.

attacks accompanied by PL propaganda charges that attacks justified because doubtful loyalty of FAL forces (including those of Houmphan) to Souvanna government. FAL would have no motivation to fight back in situation where Souvanna, apparently supported by US, taking adamant stand against Savannakhet group. In these circumstances, particularly if rumored Kong Le–PL attack against Savannakhet forces were to materialize, we fear whole anti-PL position in Laos could be demolished. Our apprehension has been heightened by additional evidence contained Vientiane's 839[3] that Souvanna striving obtain our backing to eliminate Phoumi from scene, as contrasted with earlier statements by Souvanna that he wanted our backing to help him stand firmly against PL.

There follows a résumé of certain other pertinent background considerations which have led us to a redefinition of our immediate problem in Laos and a plan of action for meeting that problem. Department considers we moving into new phase and plan of action set forth below should be used as guidance in period ahead.

Recommendations requested for implementation this plan of action particularly with respect to means of exfiltrating deputies from Vientiane and establishing liaison with the various Lao elements, i.e., King, Phoui, Houmphan, Ouane and Phoumi, as well as the line we should take with them.

I. Background Considerations

1. Souvanna has not acted upon any of conditions set forth in our 384[4] as requirements for our support of him and for Phoumi's unconditional support of Souvanna. One possible exception is that he still maintains that he is standing by his two preconditions to substantive negotiations with PL. However either Khamking's report to us (Embtel 446)[5] of counter conditions advanced by PL as requirements for their acceptance of Souvanna's preconditions was untrue, or else Souvanna has seen fit to ignore this unacceptable move by PL in his discussions with you.

2. Since setting forth our four conditions in 384 Phoumi has not taken any action against Souvanna and has in fact expressed himself willing to a) support Souvanna if latter accepted these conditions, b) dissolve his revolutionary committee if King would recognize this

[3] In telegram 839, October 28, Brown reported that Souvanna informed him that Phoumi had to be removed from Laos and asked the United States not to think of him as indispensable. Souvanna also told Brown that if the United States ceased to support Phoumi, he would "disappear." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/10–2860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Document 421.

[5] The reference is in error; telegram 446 from Vientiane, August 31, does not contain any report from Khamking. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/8–3160)

dissolution, and c) make constructive response to any reasonable proposition from Souvanna. However Souvanna has not met any of four conditions, King was unwilling to recognize dissolution Phoumi's revolutionary committee because he thought such dissolution at this time would be unwise, and finally Souvanna has not in fact made reasonable proposition to Phoumi.

3. Souvanna is rapidly losing or has lost sympathy of all important non-Communist leadership elements in Laos. Ouane and Houmphan are prepared to declare themselves opposed to Souvanna's government but have been restrained from making such declaration by us. Inpeng, Boun Oum and Ou Voravong have in past indicated readiness resign from government.

4. King is opposed to Souvanna and apparently desires to have Ouane and Houmphan declare against Souvanna as preliminary to establishment by King of para-military government in Luang Prabang.

5. *Conclusions:* It appears from foregoing that Souvanna will not be able to pull Army and non-Communist Lao elements together and provide leadership to country in standing up to PL threat.

6. *Problem* is to make transition to government which can accept these objectives without inciting a) desperate reaction by Souvanna directed against US, or b) general outbreak of military action by PL forces.

II. Plan of Action

7. Exfiltrate from Vientiane to Luang Prabang enough members of National Assembly so that there could be established in Luang Prabang quorum of National Assembly. (We gather there are already over dozen deputies outside Vientiane.)

8. After discussions with Phoui in Bangkok (in which we would point out reasons for our concern about present predicament of Souvanna's government), encourage Phoui to go to Luang Prabang at time to be determined in light of developments.

9. Authorize Ambassador Brown to make another démarche to Souvanna in which he would point out that we fear Souvanna is in process of losing country to PL because he has not insisted on observance of his two preconditions to substantive negotiations and has not been able to deal effectively with Kong Le–PL control of Vientiane.

10. Regardless outcome démarche it appears any one of three possible events would create situation in which King would probably issue, and Souvanna would probably seek to comply with, request for Souvanna to come to Luang Prabang to consult: a) vote of non-confidence by Assembly; b) coup against Souvanna in Vientiane by Kong Le group in attempt to put in Souphanouvong or Quinim as Prime Minister; c) declaration from Ouane and Houmphan at Luang Prabang against Souvanna government.

11. Souvanna would then go to Luang Prabang and after discussions with King agree negotiate with Phoui an understanding pursuant to which Phoui would be asked by King to form government that might include Souvanna. Such government would also include strong representation of old LHL and CDNI groups, perhaps including Phoumi as Minister Defense or SecState for Defense. Conceivably Ouane could remain as Commander-in-Chief with Bounleuth as FAL commander in south. Problem of placing Phoumi in such setup is recognizably difficult in view fact he not on good terms with either Phoui or Souvanna and lacks confidence in Ouane. Apparently requires arrangement in which Phoumi would be ranked below Phoui and Souvanna but above Ouane.

12. Outcome of such solution would appear to be one which would be fully acceptable to all non-Communists in Laos as well as commend itself to British, French and Australians. Would probably be acceptable also to Thais; and Vietnamese have already expressed themselves as favoring Phoui government. Souvanna could accept such an arrangement because he has worked with Phoui before and because Phoui is not Phoumi man and Souvanna would therefore not lose face vis-à-vis Phoumi.

Foregoing should be considered in light (a) possible breakdown of situation described Embtel 829,[6] and (b) necessity avoiding situation in which Souvanna exploits foreign support from both sides while failing take steps which advance US objectives of unity and integrity of country.

13. Department considers would be best not discuss this plan with other governments at this time.

14. Bangkok's 763[7] just received indicates Phoui's ideas developing along same line as above. Would be useful for Corcoran have early conversation with him to explore Phoui's ideas on how accomplish Phoui's proposals, inasmuch as he may have simpler and therefore more practicable approach than that set forth above and it would be of course highly desirable have Phoui accomplish this objective with minimum trace of US assistance.

Herter

[6] See footnote 8, Document 438.
[7] Not found.

441. Editorial Note

At the 465th meeting of the National Security Council, October 31, General Charles P. Cabell briefed the Council on Laos as part of the usual discussion of "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Cabell reported as follows:

"General Cabell characterized the situation in Laos as one of continuing drift. There had been little progress toward uniting the non-Communists, who were now concentrated in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang. Vientiane had accomplished little in bringing Kong Le under control. Pathet Lao influence was on the increase and the Pathet Lao was working with Kong Le. There had been clashes in Phong Saly Province between government troops and the Pathet Lao. General Ouane was in Luang Prabang organizing support for the First Military District. Phoumi, General Cabell indicated, was restless and had rejected the terms offered by Souvanna Phouma's emissary. Negotiations between Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao had not progressed satisfactorily from the point of view of either side. Former Premier Phoui was in Bangkok canvassing the possibility that he might become a compromise candidate for Premier." (Memorandum of discussion by Johnson, November 2; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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442. Memorandum From the Secretary of Defense's Special Assistant for Special Operations (Lansdale) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (Irwin)[1]

Washington, November 4, 1960.

SUBJECT

State Outgoing Cable 466[2] and Vientiane's 861[3]

The subject cables point up the need for firmness on our part so that the policy of establishing a pro-US government in Laos is not denigrated. State's 466 is a start in the right direction but Brown's

[1] Source: Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 B 2170, 092 Asia. Top Secret.

[2] Document 440.

[3] In telegram 861, November 2, Brown stated that before responding to the plan set forth in telegram 466 to Vientiane, he thought it useful to stress the gradual emergence of a neutralist anti-Communist faction in Laos which was pro-Souvanna and anti-Pathet Lao. Brown thought that telegram 466 "overstated U.S. ability accomplish desired

Continued

reply is lengthy repeat of his consistent feeling that Souvanna Phouma is the man we should support. In the gratuitous initial comments of his 861, Brown seems to characterize Phouma as the wave of the future—as the emerging personality on the Laotian scene.

If we support Phouma, as Brown suggests, we will in effect be supporting the establishment of a neutralist government in Laos. A neutralist government is a dangerous political vehicle for furthering US interests in the area. Furthermore, Laos is too weak to remain neutral long, especially in the hands of a vacillating leader like Phouma.

An understandable policy for Laos would be to support elements friendly to the US and seek to establish them in power. What the Ambassador seems to propose is that we support an unfriendly element on the ground that that element is more popular in the country. [*sic*] Incidentally, I am not convinced that Phouma is the most popular man on the scene in Laos.

Since State's 466 is an effort to put a known, friendly element in power in Laos, I hope we will be able to hold State to it and not let a good policy be watered down.

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results" in Laos and recommended that the United States continue to press Phoumi and Souvanna to reach an accommodation. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–160; included in the microfiche supplement)

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443. Editorial Note

At the 466th meeting of the National Security Council, November 7, General Charles P. Cabell briefed the Council on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Regarding Laos, Cabell reported as follows:

"The formation of a Committee for Neutrality and National Unity in Laos on October 31 constituted a new dangerous element in the situation there. The membership of this Committee ranged from supporters of Souvanna Phouma to members of the Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ). This Committee follows the classic pattern of Communist-front organizations. It was not clear who had provided the impetus for its formation, although it probably came from the Pathet Lao and the NLHZ. Once the proposal had been put forward, Souvanna Phouma probably felt that he had little choice but to go along. Luang Prabang might use this development as the basis for breaking away from Vientiane. Luang Prabang had held back from such action pending action by Souvanna Phouma on his promises to bring Kong Le under control.

"General Cabell called attention to the reported agreement between Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao to divide Vientiane Province between the Pathet Lao and the government. Such action could legitimize the Pathet Lao enclaves within the province. Souvanna Phouma had made another appeal to Prince Souphonuvong and may believe that he can come to terms with him. Former Premier Phoui was to meet with Souvanna Phouma in Luang Prabang. Many of the solutions for the crisis which Phoui had outlined were unrealistic but he could possibly provide a bridge. However, his usefulness was limited by the fact that his fall from power had been accompanied by great bitterness." (Memorandum of discussion by Johnson, November 7; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

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444. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 8, 1960—8 a.m.

883. Eyes only Assistant Secretary Parsons from Ambassador. I am reliably informed that during Irwin–Riley visit Savannakhet, after formal conversation was finished,[2] Riley took Phoumi aside and told him privately that U.S. had completely lost confidence in Souvanna and was backing Phoumi to go back and clean up situation. Irwin similarly told Phoumi privately that while for the moment U.S. was only supporting Phoumi in building up his defenses, in long run U.S. was supporting him all the way. These are not exact quotes but substance is accurate. Phoumi says these two statements meant more to him than anything else that was said. Reference to at least one of these was made in original draft memo of conversation but was deleted in final record.

Above for your personal background information only. I will probably have to come back fairly soon for a reaffirmation of U.S. policy if we are to keep Phoumi to his promise to follow our advice.

Brown

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–860. Top Secret; Eyes Only; No Distribution.

[2] See Document 431.

445. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, November 8, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

Laos

Our Embassy in Bangkok is following up their contact with ex-Prime Minister Phoui. He has submitted a plan of action which involves essentially support for the active resistance movement in Savannakhet in the establishment of a special resistance center in or near Vientiane. This center would employ a psychological warfare to include encouraging dissension in the Second Paratroop Battalion, spreading rumors and the like.[2]

Meanwhile, Sarit in Thailand has made statements recommending Soviet proposals for economic relations. These statements are viewed only as efforts to underscore Bangkok's complaint that neutrals receive better treatment than committed nations. However, the statements themselves may stimulate leftist and neutralist elements in Thailand.

[Here follows material on subjects unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

[2] Reported in telegram 817 from Bangkok, November 7. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–760; included in the microfiche supplement)

446. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 9, 1960—9:33 p.m.

498. Embtel 861[2] highly appreciated.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–960. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Chapman and Usher, cleared with Parsons and in draft with Steeves, and approved by Merchant. Repeated to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] See footnote 3, Document 442.

1. Basic problem is how to deal with PL to prevent their gaining decisive advantage. Souvanna's concept of negotiating with them is one way of meeting this problem. However it can be successful only if Souvanna's government resists PL demands which go beyond legitimate goals of unity and independence of Laos. We agree that considerations set forth your 861 may indeed indicate that Souvanna sincerely striving succeed in this respect, albeit on mistaken basis.

2. However our fear is that despite these efforts he is not succeeding and that political and military power is shifting in favor of PL. We think this occurring because he has conceded too many advantages to PL by his use of Quinim and Sisoumang as negotiators, by his hesitancy to take action against Kong Le, by his willingness to acknowledge PL zones of influence in Vientiane, by his apparent unwitting acquiescence in the formation of the Committee for Neutrality.

3. He is thus getting himself so enmeshed that his position cannot be clearly distinguished from that of PL and is therefore not susceptible of being supported against them. Those who would support Souvanna on Souvanna's terms would become almost by definition similarly enmeshed. If he is to be susceptible of being supported he must first determine to extricate himself from this enmeshment and be prepared to accept the views of those who would support him.

4. Would appreciate your consideration of following exposition reasons for our deep concern re Souvanna's position:

5. In pursuing his policy of neutrality Souvanna has apparently first made tack to left by entering into diplomatic relations with USSR and negotiating with PL; then to reestablish balance, tack to right by anti-Communist statement from National Assembly, house arrest of Kong Le and acquiescence to our supplying troops directly. He now appears embarking on new tack to left with setup of Committee for Neutrality. We share your reaction that this Committee is front organization in classic sense. We note Pheng's declaration that "its (Committee's) policy is also to support setting up of coalition government with participation of representatives of various political parties." It is our growing fear that step by step PL's position will be strengthened until they are able to take over government under guise of some national front government. This has been pattern elsewhere; this is pattern we see developing in Laos. In sum we cannot avoid impression that despite Souvanna's efforts PL are gaining substance their objectives.

6. Following are some remarks re your comments on political situation (para A)[3]

a) We fear that non-Communist leaders wield little power in Vientiane under present circumstances. It appears to us that revolution in real sense of word has taken place and unless situation can be

[3] Of telegram 861 from Vientiane.

normalized on new basis, power can only be objectively determined by force of arms. Somsanith, Ngon, Tiao Souk, Oun Heuan although friendly are essentially weak men. They do have following in their provinces of Nam Tha and Luang Prabang but in Vientiane what have they to oppose 1800 armed PL? (CX–211)[4] Sananikone clan which once powerful in this province appears for time being to have been eliminated as power factor.

b) Agree quieting Youth Movement helpful, but if we understand its position correctly, Movement supports negotiations with PL and we question whether it would support Souvanna in event of break with PL. Thus it seems their net influence favors PL.

c) Recognize that Syndicat des Fonctionnaires is important force but given nature of functionaries everywhere we rather believe they would go along with any government which would use their services.

d) Kong Le's "punishment" gives us no reassurance in view his recent activities such as trip to Sam Neua.

e) Finally what is "major" concession to PL and who among above groups and individuals will determine when it has been made?

7. Re military situation (para B)[5] we note following:

a) That PL represent most significant single military element.

b) That Kouprasith who is "prime leader" of group supporting Souvanna is in liaison with PL and in fact his troops at Paksane are actively collaborating with them (CX–211).

c) That leftist military elements are in "key positions of influence," evidently have complete freedom of action and have access to supplies.

d) That Ouane's presence in Luang Prabang has resulted in confusion among military leaders there and in weakening their resolve to stand up to PL (LRPA 260–261).[4] Ultimate foreseeable result is that region will lose its determination to resist concessions to PL as Souvanna gradually becomes further enmeshed in negotiations. His orders to maintain cease-fire and divide country into areas of responsibility will sap Army's will to fight.

8. Regarding test of Souvanna's position on negotiations with PL, is not the real test what is done in fact, rather than what Souvanna openly agrees to? Thus we are encouraged by your 887[6] which indicates negotiations have come to standstill pending fulfillment preconditions (cease-fire; return of Sam Neua to RLG control; rearming troops). However reported appointment of Champa as governor of Sam Neua raises new doubts re Souvanna's firmness. Champa is opportunist who voted with NLHX bloc in Assembly in 1958. As governor of Sam Neua he could only be considered as creature of PL.

9. (Para D)[7]

[4] Not found.

[5] Of telegram 861 from Vientiane.

[6] Dated November 8. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[7] Of telegram 861 from Vientiane.

a) While we recognize difficulties of creating new government we hope that some of your apprehensions may be overdrawn. Nub of our plan is to get quorum of Assembly to meet freely in Luang Prabang. If such meeting were held King who limits his action to within constitutional boundaries might be more willing to use his influence and deputies free from fears of Vientiane might be more willing to criticize present composition of government, as some have indicated they would like to do. Such meeting might only result in reshuffle of Cabinet and keep Souvanna as Prime Minister. However we would hope reshuffle would at least lead to elimination of Quinim and inclusion of stronger anti-PL Ministers such as Phoui. You may be right in believing that Phoui could not become Prime Minister at present but we should nevertheless aim at this objective if at all possible. Phoui who is shrewd observer will be able to give us his assessment.

b) We recall that grievances between Lao are not insuperable obstacles to old enemies reaching an accommodation. Phoui has already expressed his willingness to work with Phoumi (Bangkok's 788)[8] and we wonder whether in his present dilemma King might not be rather happy have Phoui at his side.

c) If Phoui were to be named Prime Minister, he could espouse Souvanna's neutralist policy. He has already endorsed it publicly.

d) Such "leftist" Cabinet members as Sisoumang and Khamsing who appear able might be included to give neutrality flavor to Cabinet.

10. a) While we consider that Phoumi may be held as one of those primarily responsible for present situation, fact is that Phoumi does represent in our view essential anti-Communist counterweight to Souvanna's penchant to accommodation with PL at any price. Consider therefore we must maintain Phoumi's faith as long as he serves our purpose.

b) Possibility of accommodation between Souvanna and Phoumi seems increasingly remote under present circumstances. Kind of pressure needed to bring Phoumi to heel would we believe have gravest repercussions in SEA. Sarit and Diem could only interpret such policy as sell-out to Communists requiring on their part readjustment of their own policies.

11. Recognize above views may appear unrealistic when situation considered on ground. Nevertheless consider it important you understand our concept of present situation.

Herter

[8] Dated November 3. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–360)

447. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 10, 1960—noon.

897. Joint State/Defense message. Reference: Deptel 444.[2] Am in full agreement important eliminate Kong Le influence from RLG Vientiane scene and assure you that no opportunity is missed to bring this matter up with Souvanna though must admit he sees situation differently and always reflects confidence his full control situation Vientiane.

Reference possibilities presented in reference telegram.

A. Force—of all possibilities listed this appears most difficult though from information as given CX–204 and 211[3] obvious Lao have not ruled it out. While Lao apparently considering some use force change Kong Le power position Vientiane we have no information sufficient detail make us believe it too practical although RLG military posture Vientiane is improving (see Embtel 861[4] [*document number not declassified*][5]). Do not feel we or Souvanna in position push for action by force. Nothing specific or practical enough to justify US support has yet been presented to us, nor do we feel situation is yet ripe for such action. For Souvanna to plot such action with Kouprasith, Ouane, Houmphan would be an admission his part that he not head of his house. For me to suggest use of force to him would only bring insistence he is in full command. For further information re dispatch military attachés see CX–195 [*document number not declassified*].[3]

B. Technique—(1) Change of commander Second Parachute Battalion and putting officers loyal to Ouane etc. in their place is two edged sword as if Second Para officers dedicated to coup objectives they might influence other units as readily as new commanders influence Second Para BN and since Second Para BN riding wave success they might well take new commanders with them. Some changes have been made, [*document number not declassified*].[5]

(2) The possibility sending Kong Le out of country has some chance of success, [*document number not declassified*][6] if invitation could be arranged. How long he would stay away is questionable as well as when he would be willing to leave. The British might be able help in some way. Souvanna would welcome his going out of country

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1060. Top Secret; Priority; Limit Distribution. Repeated priority to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 435.

[3] Neither found.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 442.

[5] Not found.

[6] Reference is to the document cited in the second reference to footnote 5 above.

on a visit to "educate him". As for Lt. Deuane, if comments paragraph 16, CX–211, [*document number not declassified*][7] have any basis, his continued presence might be helpful. In lieu of Deuane thought might be given sending Captain Kham Lom on trip or to school as several reports indicate he is very pro-Pathet Lao and is now in position considerable influence (Chief, Military Security).

(3) Several fragments information indicate Second Para BN can be weaned from Kong Le. Some say the NCO's, not the officers, are key to Kong Le control and that they can be bought. We have steered clear of any involvement such action as indications are that security not too good and do not wish interrupt or become involved in internal process which seems to be moving, albeit slowly, in right direction.

C. Execution—(1) As mentioned (A) above this not practicable through Souvanna though Ouane and Houmphan obviously thinking along these lines, see CX–204, along with some associates Vientiane. They also conscious Pathet Lao problem Vientiane area. Again, we have taken wait and see attitude as much controversy and danger supporting such actions unless they are carefully planned, and reliably organized and we ready chance extensive involvement.

(2) Planning, timing, coordination action most important and some information is available Lao are working to that end. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] ARMA have been contacted regarding coups against Kong Le. Both have had to be most careful. No one in position handle such delicate details when impossible tell actual allegiances various people or objective groups involved and both ARMA [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] have experienced some doubles or questionable contacts. Should conditions develop giving reason to believe Lao elements working toward common objective against Kong Le and, more important, Pathet Lao, am prepared to take advantage of such developments if it clear that proper political preparations for exploitation of coup have been made.

If above is to take place, i.e., use of force against Kong Le, timing must be Lao and as stated on other points, all feel situation too uncertain to justify our playing positive role at this time with any chance success.

Before going to additional ideas in reftel wish summarize:

A. Increasing number Lao recognize the dangers and pro-leftist aspects NLHX and are taking action for some solution, Lao type, to insure their center road neutrality.

B. Some elements are preparing displace Kong Le, Quinim, and others if they feel trend is too far left.

C. Some elements also recognize possibility force must be used against PL and are planning against such eventuality.

[7] Not found.

D. Situation still too fluid, allegiances too uncertain, plans too fragmentary, uncoordinated, and conflicting, and personal ambitions too predominant, to give us any adequate material with which to work.

In additional areas, the carrot rather than stick might work, e.g., Kong Le travel abroad. He might be susceptible to persuasion, e.g., some fragmentary reports have been received to effect Kong Le ready line up against PL. Efforts continuing get more information this change attitude by Kong Le as well as by Lt. Deuane.

On maneuver, no question that RLG trying place Kong Le in harmless position, this includes even Souvanna. My analysis is military probably accomplishing this more rapidly than the political group.

(A) Some action now under way steer Second Para BN back to strict neutrality. This not isolation Second Para but is to develop hard line support RLG against PL.

(B) Dissipation of Second Para BN by assigning outside Vientiane not considered too practicable. Vientiane still does not trust Phoumi, and Vientiane group will not materially reduce their military capability in face Phoumi threat. Second Para BN still the elite unit FAL, is best trained, Thai plus US and French, and has had victory. To decimate it by assigning out small groups might well give other units a rallying point and if neutrality has attraction we here feel it has, such changes would only extend the problem.

All here understand problems engendered by continued prominence Kong Le and strength and influence Second Para BN. We also feel elimination of this prominence is primarily a Lao problem and must be handled in their way and in their time. However, as mentioned before will continue push point with RLG at every opportunity. Also will have [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] ARMA follow leads associated with coups against Kong Le and/or Souvanna, and based upon best info at the time will advise if we feel action has chances of success which can be enhanced or expedited.

We must also recognize that at this stage more formidable problem for US is actually NLHX and PL rather than Kong Le. We must be sure that our necessarily limited capabilities are used at the right moment and directed at the primary target from the US point of view.

Brown

448. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 10, 1960—8:47 p.m.

500. 1. I have reviewed in two-hour meeting Nov. 10 with Secretary Gates present situation and policy with respect Laos.[2] Also participating were Deputy Secretary Douglas, Asst. Secretary Irwin and General Lemnitzer as well as Under Secretary Merchant and Asst. Secretary Parsons. We have taken fully into account your views expressed in your 861.[3]

2. We have no faith whatsoever in Souvanna Phouma and believe he is taking Laos rapidly down the road to PL take-over.

3. We remain of view that plan outlined Deptel 466[4] whereby Souvanna is ousted through legal transition to new Government and Phoui plays major role is best prospect for achievement our policy.

4. Accordingly you should proceed immediately to plan and act on this basis. You may inform key members of country team in your discretion. Department will develop views on tactics as situations evolve and will appreciate prompt comments from you, Johnson and Corcoran to insure maximum effectiveness.

5. Department's views re handling of Phoui and proposed discussions between National Assembly Delegation with Phoumi will be sent by separate message.[5]

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1060. Top Secret; Niact; Eyes Only. Drafted by Merchant, cleared in draft with Gates and Irwin and with Parsons and SEA, and approved by Herter. Repeated to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] No record of this meeting has been found. Briefing memoranda from Parsons to Herter, November 9, and from Irwin and Black to Gates, November 9 and 10, are *ibid.*, 751J.00/11–960 and Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD Files: FRC 64 A 2093, Laos 091; all included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnote 2, Document 442.

[4] Document 440.

[5] *Infra.*

449. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 10, 1960—10:48 p.m.

501. Your 895.[2] As explained in our recent telegrams Department has kept firm position that we must proceed with implementation our line of action set forth Deptel 466.[3] We have two immediate concepts re implementation that line of action.

First of these is that to maximum extent possible development of situation leading to Phoui's assumption Prime Ministership should be a purely Lao movement toward Phoui. US hand in this should be revealed as little as possible.

Second, Phoui should be allowed free hand to explore situation and test his plans, such as those set forth in Bangkok's 817,[4] in conversations with Lao leaders. Presumably when he has done this he will let us know of his findings and his recommendations. We should be prepared to back him in any reasonable plans.

Applying these concepts to situation presented by your 895 consider you should proceed as follows:

a) You should make clear to Souvanna we consider inclusion of NLHX in cabinet would be disastrous.

b) If you consider helpful, you may also wish express our deep concern re apparent united front nature of recently formed Committee of Neutrality. Experience of other countries with similar united front parties has been that, regardless of size or nature of non-Communist groups included therein, the parties are run by the Communist element. Moreover they are run in such a way that the non-Communist elements lose their separate image in eyes of general public and Communists frequently appear to be speaking on their behalf. Experience of Burmese Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League in 1946–47 is case in point. League had district and provincial organization [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. It was discovered that key posts of General Secretary at major province and district headquarters were in almost all cases held by Communists who operated organization for exclusively Communist objectives. The problem was only resolved when Gen. Aung San summarily dismissed all Communists from League.

c) Our reading of Phoumi's position is that he would not be prepared to accept such proposal nor would he listen to idea that he leave country as Ambassador to Bangkok or elsewhere. Nevertheless

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–960. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher and cleared in substance with the Department of Defense and in draft with Parsons and Merchant. Repeated niact to Bangkok and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 895, November 9, the Embassy reported that Souvanna told Brown that he had asked the Thai Government to help him get Phoumi's agreement to open discussions. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 440.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 445.

we agree that Corcoran be instructed go to Savannakhet and tell Phoumi and Boun Oum we consider it to their advantage to enter into these discussions. While we agree unwise reveal to Phoumi or Sarit proposals to be made by National Assembly Delegation, Corcoran should nevertheless make clear to Phoumi and Boun Oum that we are unalterably opposed to any proposal to include NLHX in government. Corcoran should urge Phoumi and Boun Oum in any event make constructive counter proposals and well-reasoned presentation of their position. By so doing they may be able influence members of Delegation and particularly Somsanith, and through them other National Assembly Delegates to more favorable view position Phoumi and Boun Oum.

d) Corcoran should also recommend that Savannakhet group propose meeting of National Assembly in Luang Prabang to review current situation in Laos.

e) Finally Corcoran should reiterate to Phoumi our continued opposition any attack by Savannakhet group on Vientiane. Such an attack might weld Vientiane forces and PL at time when military in capital are showing increasing restiveness toward PL.

f) If Phoui is to play any role relative these negotiations it should not be cast as attempt merely to bring Souvanna and Phoumi together, but more broadly as attempt to bring about solution which would bring non-Communist Lao leadership together. Main point is that you should avoid giving Phoui impression that objective of these negotiations is to support Souvanna as Prime Minister.

FYI. Re Bangkok's 818,[5] Phoui, who had just left Paris, in conversation with Parsons in Tokyo October 24 alluded to alleged tripartite agreement and also expressed concern that British and French Fon Mins and Secretary had decided in New York to pursue French aim along lines Sarit's representation thereof to British Ambassador Bangkok. Parsons assured Phoui this was not the case.

Our underlying idea in foregoing is that if Phoumi can be persuaded adopt reasonable attitude toward National Assembly Delegation and gain their understanding of his position, some ground work will be laid on basis of which Phoui might later be able bring about reunification Phoumi with an RLG under Phoui's leadership. End FYI.

Herter

[5] In telegram 818, November 7, Johnson reported that Sarit was concerned over an alleged "secret agreement" by the United States, United Kingdom, and France during the recent U.N. General Assembly session to accept Souvanna Phouma as the head of a neutralist Laos. In addition, Sarit believed that the French had instigated the Kong Le coup to achieve this end. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–760)

450. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Secretary of State[1]

Washington, November 11, 1960.

SUBJECT

Coup d'Etat Staged at Luang Prabang, Laos, November 10

At approximately 5 p.m., November 10, a coup d'etat was carried out in Luang Prabang by Major Bountheng, Commander of the 3rd Infantry Battalion. It appears that Bountheng's troops were mobilized in full battle dress and took control of all military installations in the city with one company guarding the palace and trucks blocking the airfield runway.

The coup was discussed with other officers in Luang Prabang who concurred. Phoumi Nosavan in Savannakhet was also informed.

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma was at Luang Prabang November 10 but was allowed to proceed by air to Nam Tha, a city near the Chinese border, to which he was enroute. General Ouane Phatikone [*Rathikon*], Commander of the Laotian Army and Colonel Houmpanh Horasing, Commander of the 1st Region (Luang Prabang province) appear to have gone with Souvanna.

Souvanna returned to Vientiane November 11 while Ouane remained at Muong Say, a local military center in Luang Prabang province, and Houmpanh was sent back to Luang Prabang, with Souvanna's approval, to discuss the situation with Bountheng in an effort to avoid bloodshed. There is no indication as yet of the direction in which Rathikon and Houmpanh will throw their support. Meanwhile it is reported that a first contingent of Savannakhet forces have been flown to Luang Prabang.

Bountheng's sole objective appears to have been the overthrow of the "Communist-controlled" Government of Souvanna Phouma. The King is reported to be sympathetic.

Ambassador Brown reports[2] that frequent rumors of an imminent attack on Vientiane by the Phoumi forces may incite the Pathet Lao to secure control of Vientiane. Ambassador Brown says that his immediate efforts will be directed to persuade Col. Kouprasith, the Commander of the Lao Army in Vientiane, to maintain control of the city for which he appears to have adequate facilities. He may receive help

[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Pol Affairs 11/60 Laos. Secret. Drafted by George Reynolds and cleared with Usher.

[2] In telegram 904 from Vientiane, November 11. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.00/11-1160; included in the microfiche supplement)

from one of Bountheng's companies which happens to be in Vientiane under a Captain Southep whom Bountheng has ordered to resist the PL.

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451. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 11, 1960—8 p.m.

907. Addressees pass interested agencies. Re Deptels 500 and 466[2] and message 11 Nov through other channels.[3] Agree Bountheng coup may provide opportunity expedite progress toward objectives reftels.

Key figure in legal transition to new government is King. As recognized in all reftels, it is he who must call Souvanna to Luang Prabang, and he who must act if new govt is to be formed. So far he had been unwilling do so and Khamphan Panya is reported to have said today King will not act until Souvanna resigns. It is my view that Souvanna is not thinking of resigning as yet and would need to be pushed by King.

However, situation now presents possibility King could be induced act at least to call principals together to find solution. Phoui is in Luang Prabang as are Bounpone and Sourit. We have report Phoumi may be coming Nov 12. In any event Phoumi now much more likely come if asked by King since forces loyal to Phoumi control city. Hence King runs little risk rebuff if he invites Phoumi now. Believe Souvanna will go Luang Prabang if invited by King and offered safe conduct. Such meeting would be quicker and more reliable method working out solution than negotiations contemplated Embtel 385[4] and Deptel 501.[5]

Important early solution be found before troubles break out between Pathet Lao and FAL and/or between Phoumi/Phouma forces.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1160. Secret; Niact; Eyes Only. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 9:02 a.m.

[2] Documents 448 and 440, respectively.

[3] Not further identified.

[4] The reference is in error. Apparently it should be to telegram 895, November 9; see footnote 2, Document 449.

[5] Document 449.

Therefore am asking my representative Luang Prabang, unless otherwise instructed by Dept by 0900 Vientiane time 12 Nov, to consult with Phoui soonest to ascertain his views desirability such conference and best way inducing King call meeting of three principals to work out solution. Unless Phoui sees objection we will urge him do his best get King arrange such meeting.

Brown

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452. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 12, 1960—12:03 a.m.

507. In working toward Phoui solution along lines set forth our exchange of messages through other channels[2] we visualize that Phoui may be able induce King call meeting Luang Prabang of Phoui, Souvanna and Phoumi. Phoui would be working toward formation of new Government, with himself as Prime Minister, which would be supported by Phoumi and reunited FAL.

Possibility such solution has emerged at this time as result Phoui's presence and Bountheng coup. Key requirements for achieving solution seem be first willingness of King to act, second agreement of Souvanna and Phoumi come to Luang Prabang, third willingness of Phoumi accede to Phoui solution, fourth adequate pressure on Souvanna to resign and let Phoui form new RLG.

To assist in meeting these requirements we have following specific thoughts:

1. Corcoran (or Amb Johnson) approach Lao Ambassador Khamphan in Bangkok and urge him get word to King that he must sieze this opportunity to act as may be last chance for Monarchy to reunite anti-Communist Lao against PL under mutually acceptable Government.

2. Phoumi be urged carry through his reported intention go to Luang Prabang.

3. Both Phoumi and Phoui be advised seek convening of National Assembly in Luang Prabang.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1260. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher and cleared with Parsons in draft. Repeated priority to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Not further identified.

4. Ouan and Houmphan be advised it is our hope that a meeting of Phoui, Phoumi and Souvanna in Luang Prabang may be opportunity bring about reunification of FAL under mutually acceptable Government. We would hope that they would now move to support elements free of Vientiane restraints. (FYI. This might result in their taking position against Souvanna Government. End FYI.)

5. US representative reiterate to Phoumi and inform Phoui that we opposed to inclusion any NLHX in Government and that would be very unwise consider return of ICC.

6. Reiterate to Phoumi that he must not disturb this delicate situation by using his forces to attack Vientiane. Such attack would be likely unite various elements in Vientiane against attackers and so frustrate hope of political and relatively unprovocative solution.

7. If in view these developments Phoumi goes Luang Prabang in next day or so, Corcoran could go Luang Prabang instead of Savannakhet. Otherwise Emb Officer from Vientiane or Bangkok could go.

8. Re resulting situation Vientiane, may be that Kouprasith and Southep could muster enough strength to protect city from PL for time being. Although we unable see how this might be instigated, it seems clear that if Kouprasith could arrest Kong Le, Deuan and Thong My, families of deputies might feel safer.

Herter

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453. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 12, 1960—7:45 p.m.

511. Reference Vientiane's 912[2] and Bangkok's 850 and 852.[3] In view Bangkok report that Phoumi not planning go Luang Prabang and evidence he engaged in some operation against Vientiane, recommend Corcoran proceed ASAP to Savannakhet.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1260. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher, cleared in draft with Parsons and in substance with McRae of DOD/ISA. Repeated niact to Bangkok and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 912, November 12, Brown reported that Souvanna formally asked for a cessation of further U.S. military supplies to Luang Prabang. (*Ibid.;* included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] In telegram 850, November 12, Johnson reported a conversation with Sarit in which they discussed the coup in Luang Prabang and the potential adverse consequences for Phoumi. In telegram 852, also November 12, the Embassy discussed advan-

Continued

He should tell Phoumi that Souvanna becoming increasingly isolated from anti-Communist elements throughout country including Vientiane. Situation rapidly moving toward stage where regrouping of these elements against PL may be possible. He therefore must not make any move to attack Vientiane since this is one thing which would weld PL and anti-Communist elements in Vientiane together again behind Souvanna. Moreover would undoubtedly lead to request by Souvanna that US stop supplies to Savannakhet as he has done re Luang Prabang. As we have already explained to Phoumi this would place us in impossible situation.

Corcoran should also tell Phoumi that Phoui is in Luang Prabang urging King to call meeting of Phoui, Phoumi and Souvanna. We hope that such meeting would lead to convening of National Assembly in Luang Prabang and reorganization of RLG on lines that Phoumi and other anti-Communist elements could and should support. Urge Phoumi also to send message to King supporting Phoui's approach.

Corcoran should also tell Phoumi our views re inclusion NLHX in Government and return of ICC.[4]

For Bangkok: In your discretion you may pass foregoing on to Sarit with idea in mind that he would support Corcoran's approach to Phoumi, and so inform Phoumi. You may wish stress to Sarit importance of holding this information very closely.

Herter

tages of Phoumi's going to Luang Prabang. (Both Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1260; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] In telegram 913 from Vientiane, November 13, the Embassy agreed with the proposed action. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

454. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 13, 1960—6:40 p.m.

513. Bangkok's 854 and Vientiane's 917.[2]

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1360. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Usher and cleared wth L/FE, the Department of Defense in substance and Parsons in draft. Repeated niact to Bangkok and priority to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 854 from Bangkok, November 13, Johnson suggested that the United States encourage the King, Phoui, and Phoumi to work together, and that the King suspend the Assembly, dismiss Souvanna, and form a government without Souvanna or

Continued

1. We believe action along lines recommended by Phoui in numbered para 1 Bangkok's 821[3] preferable to action recommended para 2 Bangkok's 854. It is our hope that if King can get Souvanna to Luang Prabang for meeting with Phoui and Phoumi he can with their help obtain Souvanna's acquiescence in convening National Assembly at Luang Prabang.

2. As stated Deptel 507[4] our objective is to get adequate pressure on Souvanna to force his resignation. Unless Souvanna resigns we have doubt concerning legality of government established by King. If Souvanna remains Vientiane and sticks to position he took with Ambassador Brown as reported Vientiane's 912[5] and supported by his communiqué on November 21 [12] (Vientiane's 911),[6] pursuit of recommendation para 2 Bangkok's 854 could well result in situation where we had in effect two governments each claiming to be legal. In such situation we might find British, French, and Australians continuing recognize Souvanna and while we and our allies in SEA recognized King's newly formed government. Our position would be complicated by fact that action by King recommended by Bangkok would be at best of dubious legality under terms of Lao constitution and would be even further weakened by fact that, even if we could persuade King take such action, his conversation with Phoui (Bangkok's 857, para 6)[7] indicates we could not persuade King his action was constitutional.

3. Another difficulty arises from ambivalent but nevertheless key position of Kouprasith. If under foregoing set of circumstances Souvanna continued maintain his government was legal, Kouprasith would probably remain loyal to Souvanna. As result Kouprasith might then be thrown into closer collaboration with PL much as was case

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the NHLX, which could then reestablish contol of Vientiane. In telegram 917 from Vientiane, also November 13, Brown disagreed with Johnson's advice. (Both *ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Paragraph 1 of telegram 821, November 8, outlined a plan by Phoui whereby the King convened the National Assembly at Luang Prabang to debate a motion of censure on the Souvanna government leading to its overthrow. A new government would be formed immediately which would reside in Luang Prabang and adopt a policy of reconciliation among all Lao. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–860; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Document 452.

[5] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[6] The *Lao Presse* communiqué announced that Souvanna could not foresee accepting any decision that the King might be forced to take under pressure of force. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1260)

[7] Telegram 857, November 13, contained the summary of a letter from Phoui to Corcoran, November 10. Paragraph 6 noted Phoui's disagreement with the King's possible action to force the resignation of the present government. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

with Kong Le earlier. We would thus lose possibility carrying Kouprasith with us, separating him from PL and having his support in preserving Vientiane from PL takeover.

4. Thus our objective in getting Souvanna to Luang Prabang is to force his resignation by combination of pressure to do so from King, Phoui, Phoumi, Ouane, and Houmpanh and if necessary by vote of no confidence in National Assembly convened at Luang Prabang. Department would of course be strongly opposed to reappointment of Souvanna as Prime Minister any new Cabinet. Would in fact prefer he not be in Cabinet at all. However believe would be worth accepting latter if this essential to avoid difficulties cited in paras 2 and 3 above and if this served deter PL from armed takeover of Vientiane. Should be noted that we estimate Souvanna might be mollified by offer post in new Cabinet, if such mollifications essential, but that he would not be willing serve under Phoui and with Phoumi and would therefore decline such offer.

5. Following actions recommended:

A. Authorize Bangkok's recommended message from Corcoran to Phoui, as we anxious get Phoui's further views ASAP.

B. In resultant conversation, Ambassador's representative Luang Prabang should also pass to Phoui our other views already set forth Deptel 507 and message already sent via other channels.

C. Corcoran should proceed Savannakhet to make approach to Phoumi as set forth Deptel 511. Should also stress Phoui–Phoumi collaboration as suggested para 5 Bangkok's 854 to Department. Should explain to Phoumi our desire avoid creating situation resulting in two RLG's both claiming legality and thereby perpetuating division anti-PL elements of country. Pending receipt info that Phoui actually urging King call meeting of Phoumi, Souvanna and Phoui and convene National Assembly in Luang Prabang, Corcoran might simply say that we urging Phoui do this. Stress to Phoumi confidential nature of our approach to him.

D. Re pay, believe best tell Phoumi this is issue which could be resolved at Luang Prabang meeting. If necessary to clinch argument, Corcoran could add we reluctant press Souvanna further on this issue now for fear we might be obliged make further commitment to him in return for favorable action. Souvanna unlikely make concession in face Phoumi's exploitation Region 1 coup. We agree with Vientiane that we cannot give Phoumi unconditional guarantee pay him one way or another. Bangkok may inform Sarit accordingly, adding that pay issue is just one more aspect of problem we hope solve by plan set forth Deptel 511 to Vientiane.

E. Re Vientiane's 913,[8] see no objection Khamphan Panya's suggestion Phoumi send liaison officer to Luang Prabang, but presume this not intended as alternative to Phoumi's participation in meeting called by King.

[8] See footnote 4, *supra.*

F. Not clear on reference to Ouane and Houmpanh proceeding Savannakhet. However agree advantages their remaining Luang Prabang. They could manifest their support of Phoui and Phoumi in Luang Prabang just as well as by going to Savannakhet—if that was to have been purpose their visit there.

G. Re Kouprasith, we still not too confident in him, but on basis your recent message[9] and USARMA 121235Z cite CX–215[10] appears he would support Phoui solution. Seems from here be better he not show hand until Phoui emerges as Prime Minister, unless this should become necessary as means of putting additional pressure on Souvanna to resign.

6. If Souvanna refuses to go to Luang Prabang we will have to turn immediately to some other plan. In preparation therefore CT should have plan for and ASAP begin implementation of exfiltration enough deputies from Vientiane so they can meet in Luang Prabang and vote no confidence in Souvanna. We also interested in indication Dr. Oudom Souvannavong who has anti-PL record may now be interested in working with other like-minded leaders in Vientiane.

7. If above plan or alternative devised by CT does not succeed, believe we would then be faced with necessity getting King to take action suggested para 2 Bangkok's 854 regardless of risks involved.

Herter

[9] Not further identified.

[10] Dated November 12. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1260)

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455. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vientiane[1]

Washington, November 14, 1960—7:27 p.m.

514. 1. Situation appears to be heading toward complete perhaps disastrous break among non-Communist elements.[2] While it question how far we can now influence situation, we should nevertheless seek

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1460. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Chapman, cleared in substance with SEA and the Department of Defense, and approved by Parsons. Also sent niact to Bangkok and repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Apparent reference to information in telegram 925 from Vientiane, November 14, in which Brown reported that Souvanna had informed him of his intention to retake Luang Prabang by force. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–1460; included in the microfiche supplement)

to implement as much of plan defined in Deptel 513[3] as possible. In particular a) we should ascertain from Phoui whether there is any possibility of inducing King call meeting Luang Prabang of Phoui, Souvanna and Phoumi and convene National Assembly there (Deptel 507);[4] b) Corcoran should proceed Savannakhet as instructed Deptel 513 and seek find out what Phoumi's plans are. Corcoran should particularly stress importance of coordinating any move against Vientiane with Kouprasith as you have [been] instructed by other channel.[5] Corcoran should also make clear to Phoumi that Vientiane military have been changing attitudes toward Pathet Lao and would appear ready cooperate with him against PL. Review of traffic raises question whether this point has ever been made to Phoumi.

2. Since Ouane appears to hold key position, we should seriously consider whether we cannot in some way dissuade him from moving on Luang Prabang.

Herter

[3] *Supra.*
[4] Document 452.
[5] Not further identified.

456. Telegram From the Embassy in Thailand to the Department of State[1]

Bangkok, November 15, 1960—6 p.m.

865. From Corcoran.

1. Flew Savannakhet November 15 accompanied by Hasey, spent one and one half hours with General Phoumi Nosavan presenting Department's views along general lines notes prepared Bangkok on basis Deptel 511 and 513[2] to Vientiane and cleared by Ambassador Johnson and by Mr. Holt representing Ambassador Brown. Naturally it was necessary modify portion of notes concerning Phoui–Souvanna Phouma–Phoumi meeting Luang Prabang in light of fact Phoumi and entire Revolutionary Committee had spent November 14 in Luang Prabang where they had discussions with King and Phoumi at least briefly encountered Phoui. I did tell General Phoumi that Phoui had

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1560. Secret; Niact. Also sent niact to Vientiane and repeated to CINCPAC for POLAD. Received at 8:54 a.m.
[2] Documents 453 and 454.

told me in Bangkok he had met General Thanom and explained to him that he, Phoui, had no political ambitions in current crisis except to contribute to its solution. Also told him Phoui had told us initiative already taken by certain groups of compatriots Savannakhet, Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang to organize resistance appeared most sound and merited his active support and that he ready cooperate unreservedly with them. Also mentioned Phoui's awareness he absent from country for several months and not familiar recent developments. Phoumi said he regarded Phoui as one of most important politicians in Laos and no personal reason why he could not work with him. He would not commit himself to cooperation Phoui in advance knowledge latter's plans but saw no obstacle to liaison between them since Phoumi had representative Luang Prabang and Phoui free travel Savannakhet. When I made points U.S. desire avoid situation resulting in two RLG's each claiming loyalty and thereby perpetuating division anti-PL elements of country Phoumi politely challenged this view. He said best way to bring about change present government would be set up new revolutionary government embracing most of country and calling for constitutional reform.

2. Concerning Phoumi–Phoui–Souvanna Phouma meeting Phoumi had no objections but he did not think Souvanna Phouma would respond royal invitation since he had already gone on record to effect King under duress. He felt that even if Souvanna Phouma desired go Luang Prabang PL would prevent him. Said Souvanna very down-hearted as result Luang Prabang coup but expressed doubt Souvanna would want to go to Luang Prabang so long as he felt himself supported [by] PL and French Government of General de Gaulle. Said French circles would probably arrange Souvanna's liquidation by PL rather than permit him go to Luang Prabang, resign and tell all about alleged French complicity Kong Le coup.

3. Phoumi said he felt that while it worthwhile try to get Souvanna, Phoui and himself to Luang Prabang with view changing present government this could provide only temporary solution and new crisis would arise shortly. Need was for more basic solution including constitutional revision to strengthen power of King, of National Assembly and of individual ministers while diminishing power of Prime Minister. Savannakhet group had such revision under study. Also under study was proposal for eventual simplification national flag as recently reported Bangkok press. During visit Luang Prabang Revolutionary Committee had proposed King remove Souvanna and dissolve National Assembly. King had declined on grounds well known constitutional scruples. Group then proposed to King preparation report conclusions of which would recommend revision of Cabinet. King would be expected take no action except publicly wish group well in its endeavors. King seemed squeamish about this and reserved

position. I took occasion mention U.S. view that NLHX should not be included in new government and that their inclusion would be disastrous. Phoumi replied that this was a dead issue. Nobody really thought any longer of settling score with PL Lao style. They were now regarded as dangerous enemies under foreign control. I also mentioned U.S. view it would be very unwise consider return of ICC. Phoumi replied this also pretty dead issue now.

4. I mentioned U.S. opinion Souvanna Phouma becoming increasingly isolated from anti-Commie elements in country including Vientiane. Said situation moving rapidly to stage where grouping of these elements against him might be possible. Said situation appeared to be developing to advantage patriotic anti-Commie element. Nevertheless extremely delicate. If for example Phoumi forces should attack Vientiane the delicate balance would be completely reversed in favor of Commies. This was the one thing that would weld PL and anti-Commie elements in Vientiane together again behind Souvanna Phouma. U.S. Govt felt therefore Phoumi must not make any move to attack Vientiane; Phoumi replied blandly that he agreed and that this was precisely why he was not going to make any military move against Vientiane. Also he was not going to make any move which would risk loss of U.S. support on which he depended.

5. This led me to ask for Phoumi's estimate politico-military situation in Vientiane and his current opinion Kouprasith's capabilities. Phoumi replied radio intercept yesterday indicated Kouprasith had been replaced as Chief of Staff FAL by Colonel Bounma. He felt Kouprasith had probably made some effort to resist PL but had also collaborated with them and issued orders to PL to attack Savannakhet forces. In past two days there had developed a quarrel between Kouprasith and PL over question of pay and rank and between Kouprasith and Kong Le over the use of certain trucks. He felt PL had probably maneuvered Kouprasith into trap.

6. Phoumi expressed confidence he had military situation Luang Prabang well in hand and stated Ouane and Houmphan, latter ill, in Luang Prabang and both expected Savannakhet today or tomorrow. Ouane in Muong Sai would be flown to Savannakhet. Phoumi had refused his request for stopover Luang Prabang enroute. Made it clear he still distrusted Ouane and had low opinion of him. Diagnosed Houmphan's illness as severe hangover from too much rice alcohol. (On entering Phoumi's HQ I met and exchanged amenities with General Sing who was setting on the front porch obviously very much at loose ends.)

7. Phoumi volunteered info that Somsanith under date Nov 9 had sent proposal Phoumi meet with National Assembly delegation at Bangkok, Phnom Penh or Saigon. Phoumi said Revolutionary Committee meeting later today to consider this offer. They had no intention

refusing it and he expected they would make constructive counter offer that delegation come to Savannakhet under assurances full immunities but not of course immunities of National Assembly members since Savannakhet no longer recognized National Assembly. Almost in next breath and with straight face Phoumi said he already could round up some 20 Deputies outside Vientiane area and if Somsanith and associates came to Savannakhet he might have majority of National Assembly which could vote no confidence in Souvanna Phouma. He admitted Deputies unlikely participate in such action so long as families behind in hostage situation Vientiane.

8. Phoumi eventually came around to the troop pay question by stating King told him yesterday that when asked by Assistant Secretary State Parsons during visit whom he wanted U.S. to support, King had replied he wanted U.S. to support Savannakhet forces. Phoumi said he also had gotten impression U.S. had decided support his forces and he could not understand why U.S. would not furnish pay except on condition he submit to Vientiane. In line nature my current instructions and in view time and energy expended this subject in past meetings, I said only that I thought that this was an issue that could be resolved at a Luang Prabang meeting.

9. At close of meeting Phoumi asked me extend his respectful greetings to Admiral Felt whom he knew to be in Bangkok and to tell Admiral Felt he hoped U.S. would continue to support him.

10. *Comment:* I made every effort keep conversation on friendly plane but in light my reiterated instructions I felt obliged set forth Department and Embassy Vientiane views with great precision except for aforementioned modification portion of my approach concerning Luang Prabang meeting to take into account fact Phoumi had already been there. Nevertheless I must report that I had impression Phoumi and I were talking at cross purposes many times during discussion notably in reference to Phoumi–Souvanna Phouma–Phoui collaboration, necessity avoiding competing governments and troop pay question. It appeared to me Phoumi did not think line I was taking jibed with his estimate his present power position or his estimate increasing PL political power Vientiane. In discussing troop pay question he said he expected to have serious desertion problems shortly because unable pay troops. Concerning latter question I feel bound suggest that Embassy Vientiane, understandably concerned about problem "legality" Souvanna Phouma government, consider following question:

"Are we under present circumstances Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Xieng Khouang, Savannakhet and Pakse prepared to stand pat on the troop pay question even if this means disintegration of FAL forces outside Vientiane area?"

Johnson

457. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 15, 1960—8:47 p.m.

517. Our reading present situation is that while Phoui seems like idea of conference three principals (Souvanna, Phoui, Phoumi) in Luang Prabang, neither King nor Phoumi considers this a very practical approach on grounds that Souvanna probably would not come and more importantly because they seem to have in mind plan of military action which would presumably unite Luang Prabang and Savannakhet and involve some kind of coup within Vientiane supported by attack with Phoumi force. In any event, Souvanna has now gotten himself into position where despite his earlier abhorrence of Lao fighting Lao and his protestations that he would hold line against PL, he proposing initiate civil war by attack against Luang Prabang and seems be seeking PL cooperation in this. Thus emerges picture of Souvanna supported by PL attacking King supported by FAL.

Important that US position in this issue be made clear to parties involved. We favor action by King and National Assembly which would bring about new government uniting all anti-Communist elements behind King and opposing PL. Government such as we visualize might best be headed by Phoui at this time. We hope that Lao can bring this about without fighting among themselves. This is why we have urged meeting of Phoumi and Phoui with Souvanna and convening of National Assembly at Luang Prabang as means effecting peaceful transition to new government which would unify Lao people against Communist menace to their national integrity. Souvanna can save his country from civil war if he will resign and allow King seek formation new government supported by Luang Prabang and Savannakhet.

If Souvanna will not resign and if proposed meeting of three leaders at Luang Prabang now impracticable, other steps must be taken to induce his resignation. Essential element would seem be display of unity between Phoui, Phoumi and Luang Prabang–Savannakhet groups combined with meeting of National Assembly at Luang Prabang to vote no confidence. To these ends following actions should be taken:

1) Ouan and Houmphan should be informed ASAP [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] that we favor action by King and National Assembly which would bring about new government which

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1560. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Chapman and Usher and cleared in draft with Parsons, Merchant, and Colonel McCrea. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

we could support, uniting all anti-Communist elements behind King and opposing PL. They should also be told that we think essential that they align themselves with other anti-Communist elements in defending King and Luang Prabang against PL.

2) We should continue efforts to get to Luang Prabang quorum of National Assembly members adequate for no confidence vote. We gather there are already about 20 deputies outside capital and only few more would need be exfiltrated. Might be suggested to Phoui for instance that he call deputies over whom he has influence to meet with him in Luang Prabang.

3) Time has now come to encourage Inpeng, Ou Voravong and Boun Oum to resign from Cabinet as they have previously desired to do and go to Luang Prabang. This action alone should considerably reduce Souvanna strength.

4) Since possibility PL takeover of Vientiane not to be discounted whatever is political outcome, you should make every effort to win over Kouprasith, help him weld anti-Communist forces under him and establish liaison between him and Savannakhet and Luang Prabang. We consider that if military means are required to recapture Vientiane, greatest chance of success lies in takeover of city from within coordinated with attack from without.

5) It would be ideal as counter to Souvanna's public assertion that King prisoner of Luang Prabang coup group if King would authorize public statement on his behalf by President of King's Council or SecGen King's Palace along line attributed to King by Phoui [*document number not declassified*][2] that Souvanna is prisoner of Pathet Lao and is not free. If radio reported to have been delivered Luang Prabang by Phoumi is operable, such statement might be broadcast from there. In any event widespread dissemination of this line in manner unattributable to US would have beneficial result not only in Laos but also in other addressee countries as well.

6) Our general position as described above should be made clear to Phoumi on confidential basis. He should be told also that we entirely opposed to idea setting up revolutionary government because it could not be internationally recognized. Central objectives should be getting legal government which he can support and through which US can continue unimpeded its support FAL.

7) Phoui should also be informed on confidential basis of our position and should be asked to make it clear to King.

8) You should approach Souvanna to explain our position along following lines. We are shocked that he planning use Kong Le forces to attack FAL forces at Luang Prabang. We can only see such action as initiating civil war between PL and FAL with Souvanna ultimately

[2] Not found.

finding himself on PL side. Tragedy of such situation should be apparent to him in view his own earlier dedication to avoiding fighting among Lao and uniting country in order that he could take firm line with PL. We do not see how he can seriously contemplate using his position as Prime Minister to instigate such undertaking. We would think that his patriotic instincts would lead him to resign his position and support some alternative which could unite FAL and country against PL in hope averting civil war such as that which he apparently now contemplating. You should tell him that as situation has developed it appears that all elements outside Vientiane not cooperating with PL and Kong Le no longer support his government. (If Ouane and Houmphan have not committed themselves, you would of course modify foregoing slightly.) Our honest opinion is that sympathies of King himself lie with those who would be opposing PL should such conflict eventuate.

9) You should notify Department when you plan approach Souvanna so that we may inform British, French, and Australians before or soon after approach is made. Meanwhile we shall prepare allies (French, British, and Australians) for rapid evolution of situation by telling them we have come to conclusion that Souvanna cannot restore peace to Laos, that on contrary country is heading for civil war, and that therefore new governmental formula must be found. We are not prejudging new government but would hope to see reestablishment political processes based on constitution. Would appreciate recommendations from all addressees as to whether we should go further in taking British, French, and Australians into our confidence at this juncture even before Vientiane has approached Souvanna.

10) Re pay issue, and specifically question raised by Corcoran (Bangkok's 865)[3] we not prepared to have FAL disintegrate for lack of pay. It should be explained to Phoumi that only money we have available for pay is physically in Vientiane. Reluctant release October pay until September pay is received by Phoumi. FYI. We urgently developing procedure for handling this, in event situation is not clarified soon by resignation of Souvanna. End FYI.

Herter

[3] *Supra.*

458. Memorandum of a Telephone Coversation Between the Secretary of State and the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons), Washington, November 16, 1960, 6:35 p.m.[1]

The Secretary telephoned Mr. Parsons and said he thought the letter from Phoui to Corcoran was an extraordinary document.[2] Apparently, Phoui was in Luang Prabang. Parsons said he was and was very active. He explained what was happening over there. The Secretary said the cable he had just read was very encouraging.[3] Parsons said we were trying to precipitate a change of government and they had just had a meeting on this whole question in Merchant's office.[4] The Secretary said he assumed that Brown had gotten a copy of the cable. Mr. Parsons said that Phoui was coming along all right and they had decided to give things a little more of a shove. The Secretary asked if they were flying CAT planes and Parsons said there have been planes taking supplies directly to different regions in accordance with the plan that had been worked out.

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Herter Papers, Memoranda of Telephone Conversations. Transcribed by Mildred Asbjornson.

[2] The translated text of this letter, November 10, was transmitted in telegram 860 from Bangkok, November 14. The letter was marked by Phoui's self-promotion as a candidate to replace Souvanna Phouma. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1460; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Not further identified.

[4] No record of this meeting has been found.

459. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 17, 1960— 4 p.m.

938. Bangkok for Admiral Felt. Reference Deptel 517.[2] As reported Embtel 935,[3] I think danger attack by Vientiane on LP now remote and that skids getting under Souvanna as Prime Minister.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1760. Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Repeated niact to Bangkok, to Saigon, Phnom Penh, Paris, London, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 457.

[3] Dated November 16. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

Question therefore resolves itself into matter priorities and timing as to how best administer final push. We all agree best for Lao to do this as much themselves as possible (Deptel 501,[4] paragraph 2). In any event our action must be according to a plan fully accepted by Lao elements we are supporting if it is to be effective. Agree essential element our plan is unity between Phoui, Phoumi, ourselves and LP in support our plan. This is first and fundamental requirement. Also agree that setting up revolutionary government unwise. We do not yet have Phoumi/Phoui agreement that this is the right course. Phoui agrees but Phoumi, who now holds predominant military power, does not. So our first task is persuade Phoumi cooperate in our plan. Without this agreement and full cooperation with Phoumi, this effort cannot succeed. Believe Corcoran should renew effort to achieve this end and that we should not act until this fundamental prerequisite success our plan has been established.

On numbered paragraphs reference telegram: (1) Agree for Ouan, though his exact status and potential still uncertain as he is now in Savannakhet under Phoumi control. In addition, special effort should be made get Ouan reestablish his contacts with anti-PL officers Vientiane with whom he has special relationships to get them stay in city and cooperate Kouprasith in defense against PL. We should hold off on Houmphan (now in hospital LP under guard) until he recovers from his illness and his relationship with Bounleut, Bountheng and others is clarified.

(2) Agree in principle. Three deputies have already approached us and we helping. Problems however serious. Phoumi would, of course, have to be persuaded have such meeting and let his deputies go LP. Nineteen deputies now out of Vientiane, one of whom is out of country. Tiao Souk, formerly staunch Souvanna man, now vacillating wildly. Twelve more at least required. Most deputies reluctant leave without families. (Most have large families and one deputy told us he had forty relatives living with him and would not desert them.) Considerable sums money will be required though this, of course, manageable. Security measures in city being tightened. Leaks almost certain if we start urging departure. This will reveal our position prematurely, with consequent limitation our capacity continue forward our interests here, not to mention consequences internationally. Therefore, believe most we can do this juncture is respond affirmatively requests for help, and urge Phoumi and Phoui to work on deputies they know.

Also relevant that Souvanna told press yesterday he would agree assembly meet LP if safety assured.

[4] Document 449.

(3) Again feel resignations should be timed with other measures in our plan. Moreover, Inpeng in key position keep us informed Cabinet actions, PL negotiations and financial plans government. Boun Oum could easily and probably safely be persuaded go.[5]

4) Agree. Would be helful if Phoumi would make contact with Kouprasith. ARMA endeavoring persuade several key anti-PL officers who considering leave for Savannkhet stay here and fight PL.

5) Agree action proposed would be ideal but am convinced King will not act. Result Phoumi and Phoui recent talks with King clearly confirm this. However, LP radio might put the story out in King's name without his approval.

6) Agree. Essential Phoumi concur our plan.

7) Agree.

8) Believe démarche Souvanna outlined paragraph 8 unnecessary on matter of attack on LP and premature on question resignation. This should be used only as last resort, since once we come out in open to Souvanna that we want him resign we place ourselves utterly in his hands. All he has to do to put us in completely untenable position internationally is tell press that we are asking him resign or announce it over radio and we are on the spot publicly for most blatant kind of interference in international [*internal*?] affairs, thus frustrating policy Department telegram 425.[6] He is quite capable of doing this, as shown by his remarks about us to press yesterday on much less provocation. This he said is "no longer national, but international problem." (Embassy telegram 930)[7] Also he most likely stop our aid to Phoumi if we show our hand too closely. Another real possibility is appeal by Souvanna to UN with consequences foreseen Department telegram 425.

Would also precipitate open break with British and French Ambassadors who will rally Souvanna support unless otherwise directed by their governments as result US démarche proposed paragraph 9, reference telegram.

Lao are pushing Souvanna. There is a feeling of trimming sails to catch Phoumi wind stirring in Vientiane. Let us let them do it with discreet assistance from us as in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. It may

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[5] In telegram 529 to Vientiane, November 18, the Department of State sent the following instructions concerning paragraphs 2 and 3: "In view pace of events believe that we must accept some risks to achieve our objectives. Therefore believe [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] should be authorized take prudent actions to exfiltrate deputies and to encourage resignation Ministers." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1760)

[6] Document 432.

[7] In telegram 930, November 16, the Embassy transmitted to the Department of State a summary of Souvanna's press conference of that same date. When asked if the United States was supporting the rebel forces in Savannakhet, Souvanna replied "certainly." When asked if this was illegal, Souvanna gave the same answer. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1660)

be necessary for them to do it militarily, probably without much bloodshed, if Phoumi and Kouprasith can get adequately integrated. But let us reveal our stand as little as possible (Department telegram 501, paragraph 2).

10) I agree FAL should not be allowed disintegrate for lack of pay. But I still say stand firm. Phoumi can have the money he needs by one simple action. For us to pay covertly runs great risks for us with UN and may mean paying twice again. We got away with it once without public exposure but practically impossible to do so again. It invites a demand for ouster of all our PEO representation, thus hamstringing us completely and depriving us of our means of communication with LP and Savannakhet. It also loses us our already tenuous control over Phoumi. If we yield on this one he will know absolutely that all he has to do where he disagrees with us is to stand his ground and US will come obediently to help.

Believe Department should reveal our general position, but not specific actions, soonest to British, French and Australians. Re paragraph 9 reference telegram, if they could agree, it would be most helpful and I think time has come to make our position clear to them even if they disagree. We should know their position and the consequences we face from them, so as to know how best to act. Doubt if they would agree effort force resignation Souvanna. They might be prepared join us in urging negotiation and cabinet reshuffle. They might even accept Phoui. Please make clear to them that we have not taken active steps against Souvanna so far but have confined ourselves to support FAL in all areas to maintain its integrity and opposition to PL. This for my protection with Addis and Falaize as well as for USG protection should matter arise in UN. We must always remember that there is considerable risk French leak to Souvanna. Should base our case on now demonstrated incapacity Souvanna to govern, his involvement with PL, and King's opposition to him. I am going Bangkok this afternoon to see Admiral Felt at his request. Consider this meeting important.[8]

Meanwhile, however, we can proceed with basic prerequisite getting Phoumi agreement our plan and with actions 1, 4, 6 and 7 and Department can proceed with paragraph 9. Next day or two should also clarify position Souvanna. I can, of course, get back here on few hours notice if necessary.

Foregoing represents views all members country team, independently arrived at by each, and consolidated after detailed study and deliberation.

Brown

[8] A brief summary of this November 18 meeting is in telegram 874 from Bangkok; see footnote 2, Document 461.

460. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 17, 1960—4 p.m.

939. For Assistant Secretary Parsons only from Ambassador. Hope you will see Embtel 938,[2] especially second paragraph. It seems to me that so far we have all overlooked a key element to the success of our plan; that Phoumi, the principal power factor, has not yet accepted it. Without his full cooperation, it cannot work.

I have just received Dept's message [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] on pay.[3] I beg of you not to allow us to be forced by one man's stubbornness into cutting our throats in Vientiane, in the UN and with Phoumi by giving in on this issue. It will inevitably be known and our opposition is now in a mood to exploit it. It invites a demand for ouster of all our PEO representation, thus hamstringing us completely and depriving us of our means of communication with LP and Savannakhet. We will be a defenseless defendant in the UN. My usefulness to you here, for the time being at least, will be at an end. Phoumi will be wholly out of our control. I can assure you that the FAL will not disintegrate. Let's keep a steady nerve.[4]

Brown

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1760. Secret; Niact; No Distribution.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Not further identified.

[4] In telegram 522 to Vientiane, November 17, the Department of State responded that it was aware of the dangers Brown outlined, and was seeking a way of handling the issue to avoid Brown's worse fears. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–1760; included in the microfiche supplement)

461. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, November 19, 1960—2:38 p.m.

530. Bangkok's 874.[2]

1. Approve your plan with additions as follows and with exception pay issue which will be subject another message:

2. *To Phoumi.* Corcoran should return to Savannakhet immediately and renew efforts to persuade Phoumi to our views.

a. Reemphasize growing isolation of Souvanna and need to bring about rapid, legal and if possible peaceful transition to new government. Revolutionary government might enhance position of Souvanna government by contrast with latter's constitutional status including his ability obtain international support. Remind Phoumi US itself would then find it perhaps impossible support him.

b. Transition can be brought about by Assembly vote and/or resignation of Souvanna. Pressures should therefore be built up to hold Assembly meeting in Luang Prabang.

c. To emphasize isolation of Souvanna and to develop pressures, greatest need of close liaison with deputies and officers in Vientiane and King and officers in Luang Prabang. (He might more usefully use Ouane for this purpose.) If peaceful transition fails for whatever reason, coordination of entire Army will be of crucial importance. If Phoumi fails to unify Army, it doubtful he can succeed against united PL.

d. Since Assembly key to peaceful transition, Phoumi will be well advised to give Somsanith positive answer to induce him come with his delegation. Phoumi might then be able persuade them go to Luang Prabang to urge on King calling meeting in royal capital. Somsanith might be particularly amenable this idea if Phoumi shows himself conciliatory.

3. *To Phoui.* We have no report of Phoui's reaction to our plan Deptel 517.[3] Should in particular be encouraged to: a) press King take positive action and at least call Assembly meeting Luang Prabang pointing out to him extent to which Souvanna is collaborating with PL and rapidly accelerating pace of his appeasement of Communist bloc;

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11-1860. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman and cleared by SEA and with the Department of Defense and Merchant in substance. Repeated niact to Bangkok and to CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 874, November 18, Johnson reported that discussions with Brown, Admiral Felt, and Admiral Wellings had produced a plan to let the pressures mount on Souvanna for a few days and to confine U.S. action to making identical approaches to Phoumi, Phoui, and the King to replace Souvanna with a legal government which the United States could support. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] Document 457.

b) invite deputies over whom he has influence to come Luang Prabang even without summons King (e.g. Peng Norinder in France); c) do his utmost to develop and strengthen liaison with Vientiane and Savannakhet.

4. You should by whatever means possible win over Kouprasith and promote unity of Vientiane officers to be prepared defend capital against PL. You should also help establish liaison between selected officers and Savannakhet and Luang Prabang.

Herter

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462. Editorial Note

Souvanna Phouma flew to Sam Neua on November 18 for 2 days of discussions with his half-brother Souphanouvong. During these talks Souphanouvong agreed to join a proposed coalition government of national union made up of all factions within Laos including the Pathet Lao and Phoumists with the only qualification being that Phoumi and Boun Oum not serve in the Cabinet. These two, however, could serve in the new government in other non-Cabinet positions. Souvanna wanted the King to call a conference in Luang Prabang to be attended by the leaders of all the Lao factions under a Royal guarantee of safe conduct. He asked Brown to provide an American aircraft to fly a letter to Luang Prabang to the chairman of the King's Council suggesting such a conference. (Telegrams 964 and 968 from Vientiane, November 21; both Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2160)

463. Memorandum of Telephone Conversations, November 21, 1960[1]

6:20 p.m.

The Secretary telephoned General Goodpaster and asked if he had received [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] the messages from Laos.[2] Goodpaster said he had not and the Secretary said the messages were on the way over. The reports indicate that Souvanna Phouma, the Secretary said, with his troops has already left Vientiane to take Luang Prabang, planning to meet up with some Pathet Lao on the way. The Secretary said we were in process of drafting a wire to Vientiane to the effect we would back Phoumi's forces.[3] The Secretary said we would want to get to Goodpaster the text of the message to pass on to the President in Augusta. Goodpaster said he could make arrangements to transmit it to Augusta but he thought it might be better for the Secretary to telephone the President.

6:30 p.m.

The Secretary telephoned the President in Augusta about the move on Luang Prabang. The Secretary said we felt we ought to take the wraps off Phoumi right away. The President inquired about the size of Phoumi's forces. The Secretary said it all depended on who stayed with him, and that he had plenty if the men stayed with him. The Secretary mentioned paying the Phoumi troops directly and the President said he would tell the troops they would get one-half pay now and the rest when they "licked the other fellow". The other point was to provide Phoumi with CAT planes. The President asked if it didn't appear that Phoumi was the nearest thing to representing a government. The Secretary said this was so, particularly since Souvanna Phouma was playing with the Pathet Lao. The President agreed to the points being included in the cable to Vientiane.

(Mr. Merchant drafted and dispatched the cable 11/21/60)

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[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Herter Papers, Memoranda of Telephone Conversations. No classification marking. Transcribed by Mildred Asbjornson.

[2] These telegrams, November 20, 21, and 21, are included in the microfiche supplement.

[3] Telegram 539, *infra*.

464. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Vientiane[1]

Washington, November 21, 1960—9:44 p.m.

539. I met this afternoon with Secretary Gates, Admiral Burke, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Merchant and others to consider specifically arguments you made in your message through other channels[2] urging delay in direct payment Phoumi troops. Shortly before meeting reports received [*document number not declassified*][3] indicating Kong Le and Southep forces probably combined with Pathet Lao were moving on Luang Prabang from Vientiane. Based on these reports and on assumption these reports correct[4] we dispatched message to Admiral Felt[5] (being repeated to you) instructing (1) direct payment Phoumi troops [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], (2) provision Phoumi any matériel requests and air lift by CAT, and (3) removal any military restraints hitherto imposed by us on Phoumi. Foregoing decided in full awareness risks and complications with our allies but seemed obvious minimum in support anti-communist units FAL in situation wherein Kong Le units and Pathet Lao forces starting civil war by moving on Luang Prabang.

Foregoing decisions increase importance our efforts to obtain a substitute legal government or at least cover of legality which a request to us from the King for assistance of character covered by above JCS message would give. Through Phoui or whatever channel you think best you should make renewed effort to persuade King to take role of active leadership either dismissing Souvanna Phouma or by other means creating government which could gain widest support anti-communist and non-communist elements in Laos.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2160. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Merchant and cleared with SEA. Regarding the drafting of this telegram, see *supra*. Repeated priority to CINCPAC and Saigon.

[2] Memorandum from Weiss to Bell, November 22. (*Ibid.*, G/PM Files: Lot 64 D 341; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] See footnote 2, *supra*.

[4] Brown appraised these reports in telegram 963 from Vientiane, November 21, as follows:

"Number reports being sent via other channels indicate possibility attack by Vientiane FAL forces on Luang Prabang now appears much greater. Also considerable indication PL will be involved in such attack if it comes off. While seems little doubt there has been some troop movement out of city, there still no positive indication purposes such movement. Overall, believe it too early to attempt definitive evaluation. Necessary warnings have been discreetly issued to Phoumi, Ouane, Bounleth emphasizing sensitive nature info and necessity take no action which would disclose prior knowledge. Following closely and will report." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2160)

[5] Apparent reference to JCS 986140 to CINCPAC, November 21. (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 218, JCS Files, CCS 092 (6–25–48) (2))

We are puzzled by your 964 and 968[6] reporting conversation with Souvanna which gives no indication military movement underway and suggests to us Souvanna either ignorant or deliberately misleading us. In any event it would seem height of imprudence to attempt to move Assembly and anti-communist leaders to Luang Prabang when under imminent threat of attack nor do we see any useful purpose in providing Souvanna with aircraft for transmitting his letter to the King under such circumstances. You should reply to Souvanna in this sense.

This message FYI only to addressees other than Vientiane and Bangkok. Latter should discuss situation with Sarit.

Herter

[6] See Document 462.

465. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 22, 1960—11 p.m.

971. CINCPAC for Admiral Felt. Reference: Deptel 539.[2]

1. Joint assessment by Chief/PEO, ARMA [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] of all reports today on subject possible attack on Luang Prabang contained Embtel 970.[3]

2. Agree we should make renewed effort persuade King take role active leadership. Believe, however, we must squarely face fact this not strong hope and prepare our position if he remains silent.

3. Most effective method inducing King act would be for Gen Phoumi to go Luang Prabang and make joint approach with Phoui and Kou to King. I propose suggesting this to Phoumi and Phoui. If this not feasible, possible, but far less promising approach would be following message to Methven for Phoui and similar message from Gen Phoumi to King.

4. "Please tell Phoui urgently that in view increasing reports possible attempt Vientiane forces retake Luang Prabang in collaboration PL, which if it succeeded would open Luang Prabang to eventual

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2260. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Dated November 22. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2260; included in the microfiche supplement)

PL domination and would amount to starting civil war, we believe it most important he urge King in interests saving Kingdom from Communist influence, now take speedy and resolute action to create govt which could gain widest support anti-Communist and non-Communist elements in Laos. You should explain to Phoui as background that such govt not only desirable from viewpoint Kingdom but important to provide improved basis US support defenders Luang Prabang and anti-Communist elements Kingdom."

5. Meanwhile, in order give time final effort persuade King act, and exfiltration Deputies which I assume you will wish me continue to push and also from point of view cover legality referred to reftel, recommend Phoumi be advised for present take no action against Vientiane until there is demonstrable Vientiane action against Luang Prabang and that CAT aircraft be used within southern regions to free FAL aircraft for use in actual supply Luang Prabang.

6. From military point of view CH/PEO, ARMA [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] also fear Phoumi might get his nose bloody in attack Vientiane unless he first fully coordinated with Kouprasith. We have no evidence yet his having done this.

7. Will see Souvanna tomorrow morning and refuse aircraft.[4]

8. Actions authorized, especially use CAT aircraft, will very shortly become known and will almost certainly result in formal demand by Souvanna we cease all aid Phoumi forces. Please advise position you wish me to take in this event.

9. So that I can be sure to be coordinated with you in what you will be saying in Washington and in SEATO, please also advise position I should take when questioned about our actions: (A) with Souvanna, (B) with Western allies, Indians and UN rep, (C) with press and others.

Please instruct re paras 3 and 4.[5]

Brown

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[4] In telegram 977 from Vientiane, November 23, Brown reported that he had received assurances from Souvanna that he would not attack Phoumi unless Phoumi attacked him and he denied any planned collaboration with the Pathet Lao. In view of these assurances, Brown was providing a plane to Souvanna for transmission of a letter to the King. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/11–2360; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] In telegram 975 from Vientiane, November 23, Brown noted that he had received an instruction [*less than 1 line of text not declassified*] and he withdrew his request for guidance. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2360)

466. Editorial Note

The Deputy Political Adviser to Admiral Felt, Thomas Corcoran, flew from Bangkok to Savannakhet on November 23 to meet with General Phoumi. In telegram 879 from Bangkok, November 23, Corcoran described a message which he delivered to Phoumi on instructions from Washington:

"Gist of message that Souvanna Phouma government becoming increasingly more isolated from non-Communist elements and should be replaced at earliest possible date with legal government which US could support. Phoumi and associates and Phoui Sananikone should get together as soon as possible to work out such a solution.

"Details of solution should be worked out by Lao personalities involved but Ambassador prepared promptly assist where possible. US Government believed transition to new legal government could be brought about by assembly vote or by resignation Souvanna Phouma. Pressures should therefore be built up for National Assembly meeting in LP. There was great need for close liaison with deputies and officers in Vientiane and with King and officers in LP; I noted that General Bounleut, General Ouan and Khamphan Panya had gone to Plaine des Jarres yesterday enroute to Luang Prabang. Mentioned our feeling that if peaceful transition failed for any reason coordination entire army would be necessary and that if patriotic Lao could not unify army it doubtful whether they could succeed against united PL. Since Assembly could bring about peaceful transition Phoumi would be well-advised make positive answer to Somsanith in order induce him come out with his delegation which might then be persuaded go LP to urge King to call meeting in Royal capital. Somsanith might be particularly amenable to this idea if he received conciliatory reply."

Corcoran told Phoumi that similar messages were being sent to King Savang and Phoui. Based on his brief discussions with other Lao leaders at Savannakhet, Corcoran commented that Phoumi's Revolutionary Committee seemed much more "self-confident" than during his first visit there. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2560; included in the microfiche supplement)

467. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, November 24, 1960—4 p.m.

983. Addressees pass interested agencies. Ref: Embtel 974.[2] Souvanna's note asking us immediately stop aid rebels presents us with difficult decision.[3] Following courses of action appear open:

1) We can disregard note and continue aid to Phoumi. This places us in position openly supporting rebel against legal govt; consequences in UN and elsewhere obvious. Moreover, if we are to have continuing usefulness here we must avoid open break with Souvanna as long as possible.

2) We can comply fully. This means that while majority Phoumi forces presently well supplied arms and ammo, they and forces Phong Saly still short on rice and if extensive PL operations occur, resupply munitions and spare parts will become necessary. Important Phoumi need is aircraft for command, liaison, troop lift, and furnishing material and supplies and fuel.

3) We can say to Souvanna that basis of our aid is all or nothing and if we can't supply whole army including Phoumi we won't supply any of it. This will put us in position of open pressure on Souvanna govt with international embarrassment and probably also won't carry much weight with Souvanna since we aren't giving his forces anything at moment anyway and he is drawing on treasury for his current needs. Would probably also lead him turn to Commies for help despite fact that his note to us is in reasonably friendly tones as is letter we have just received from him asking for help for Vientiane and replying to our PEO questions as to disappearance munitions stocks from Vientiane depots. This course would thus give us almost same public onus as disregarding his instructions, would not get supplies to FAL and would leave field clear for Commies.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–2460. Secret; Niact. Repeated for information niact to Bangkok and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Telegram 974, November 24, transmitted the text of Souvanna's November 22 note. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/11–2360; included in the microfiche supplement)

[3] At the Secretary of State's Staff Meeting on the morning of November 23, Parsons summarized the note and indicated that "crucial decisions" would have to be taken soon on continuing aid. "The Secretary asked to what extent we had considered withdrawing recognition from Souvanna Phouma in order to legalize the continuation of aid to pro-Western groups.

"Mr. Parsons replied that this issue was one which we might eventually have to face, but he indicated that we could probably temporize for a short time. Mr. Bohlen asked if consideration was currently being given to the possibility of the Lao raising the issue in the Security Council. Mr. Parsons replied that the possibility of the question being raised in the UN continued to be an important element in our thinking on the situation. He noted that the Lao delegation to the UN was now headed by a pro-Westerner. It seemed to be the consensus of the meeting that, as Mr. Parsons remarked, the 'moment of truth' in Laos may have arrived." (Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

4) Another possibility would be agree suspend aid Phoumi but try to get Souvanna agreement supply Phoumi food and possibly some other items, reserving decision in our own minds as to our action when outcome forthcoming meeting Luang Prabang known. There is possibility Souvanna might be willing allow continuance supplies of food for humanitarian reasons.

5) Agree comply, but send supplies to Thai border opposite Savannakhet and let Phoumi bring them across. This could not be kept secret. Therefore has some [*same*?] disadvantages as course (1) and also puts responsibility on Thais which they may not wish accept.

Major factors leading Souvanna to send his note appear to be (1) a decision by Souvanna that he is going to try in every way possible to re-establish his control over the country, (2) his fear of Phoumi attack as result his intelligence information, (3) our failure provide supplies Vientiane, (4) he feels fortified by latest assurances support PL and Soviet support, (5) possible pressure by Indians or UN, or even French or British suggestion. Significant that his note quotes N.Y. ministerial meeting agreement which he could only have learned about from French or British.

I have not stopped any aid except movements CAT aircraft into LP itself which simply advertising fact our aid is continuing despite Souvanna's prohibition in hope he won't raise question again until he gets your answer.

For obvious reasons, I would be reluctant as yet to recommend that we disregard Souvanna's note. A consistent and major objective of our policy has been to avoid getting into the position in the UN in which such action would place us, and an open break with Souvanna would greatly impair such capacity as we still have to influence course of events.

I doubt if even reassurance against attack by Phoumi or promise by us to furnish supplies to Vientiane, even if we were prepared to do so, would change Souvanna's present position until at least he sees the outcome of LP negotiations if they take place. As far as aid to Vientiane is concerned, Souvanna regards himself as legal govt entitled to ask for such aid regardless of whether Phoumi gets it. We are going to be faced with this as a separate question next Monday[4] when a specific request will be given us.

On balance therefore I see no alternative except to suspend aid to Gen Phoumi as requested by Souvanna.[5] We should endeavor get Souvanna agreement continue supply food. If no countrywide legal

[4] November 28.

[5] In telegram 522 to Vientiane, November 24, Parsons suggested that Brown "temporize" for the time being on Souvanna's request. In telegrams 909 and 910 from Bangkok, both November 25, Johnson and Corcoran argued strongly against granting Souvanna's request. (*Ibid.*, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–2460, 751J.00/11–2560, and 751J.5–MSP/11–2560; all included in the microfiche supplement)

govt emerges from projected negotiations LP and if we should then decide to resume aid to Gen Phoumi despite risks involved such action would have no more, and possibly less, serious consequences than it would if we decided today to continue aid in disregard Souvanna note.[6]

I am using Souvanna note as further pressure on King, Phoui and Gen Phoumi to get on with our plan to obtain new government.

Souvanna states plans publish note when U.S. reply received.

Brown

[6] In telegram 557 to Vientiane, November 26, the Department of State responded as follows: "We agree we cannot disregard note. We cannot however accede to virtual abandonment of anti-communist forces in Laos. Neither can we take posture that could be so interpreted by RTG and GVN. Given present extremely precarious position and fact plan aiming at replacing Souvanna now underway, we must temporize by putting onus on Souvanna."

Included in telegram 557 was the text of the temporizing note which Brown was instructed to present to Souvanna on November 28, with copies to King Savang and Phoumi. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–2460; included in the microfiche supplement)

468. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Under Secretary of State (Dillon)[1]

Washington, December 1, 1960.

SUBJECT

Situation in Laos

1. Aid

Following our request for clarification of Souvanna's demand that we stop "all aid" to "rebels",[2] Souvanna on November 30 informed Ambassador Brown[3] he wished to have us stop supplies of "arms and ammunition" to all provinces except Vientiane (which we have not been supplying), Sam Neua (which is under PL control) and Phong

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/11–3060. Secret. Drafted by Chapman and cleared by Usher. A note on the source text indicates that Dillon saw this memorandum. The source text bears the handwritten date "11–30–60," although the memorandum apparently should be dated December 1.

[2] In telegram 557 to Vientiane; see footnote 6, *supra*.

[3] Reported in telegram 1024 from Vientiane, November 30. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

Saly, all three of which Souvanna considers loyal to the Government. He had no objections to our continuing sending such items as food, pay, gasoline, uniforms or medicines. He stated that he could not agree to the supply of arms and ammunition which might be used against him.

2. Political

A delegation of seven members of the National Assembly under its President, Tiao Somsanith, has arrived from Vientiane at Savannakhet for talks with the Revolutionary Committee on "national reconstruction." Thus, with 21 other deputies already outside Vientiane, the hope for a meeting of a quorum of 30 deputies at Luang Prabang under the aegis of the King has brightened.

Souvanna has announced the composition of a delegation he plans to lead to Peiping and Hanoi in mid-December but has said that he would delay his trip if the talks with the Revolutionary Committee at Savannakhet should warrant.

Meanwhile, the King has not yet responded to Souvanna's request for a meeting at Luang Prabang with representatives of the Pathet Lao and the Savannakhet group to set up a coalition government.

3. Tripartite

Mr. Merchant will hold a meeting today (Dec. 1) with the British and French Ambassadors to review the situation in Laos and in particular endeavor to obtain their support to bring about a peaceful transition to another government formed by the National Assembly at Luang Prabang.[4]

4. Military

It is reported that Southern forces launched an attack against Vientiane forces at Ban Sot, 12 miles south of the Nam Ca Dinh, the river forming the cease-fire line.[5] This fighting appears to be Phoumi's reaction to probing actions by Vientiane forces but may also be a determined effort by Phoumi to establish his position on the river from where he could launch diversionary attacks north. Defense feels very strongly that, given the threat to Luang Prabang, Phoumi should be free to bring pressure to bear on the Vientiane forces by such attacks. We have authorized the use of CAT planes to bring supplies to the

[4] Memorandum of conversation, December 1. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.5–MSP/11–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

[5] Reported in Joint Situation Report 113, [*document number not declassified*], December 1. (Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports)

Luang Prabang garrison. We are all agreed that, if civil war does develop, the onus for its initiation should be placed on Souvanna and not on Phoumi.

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469. Editorial Note

At the 468th meeting of the National Security Council, December 1, Allen Dulles gave his usual briefing on "U.S. World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." Dulles reported on the situation in Laos as follows:

"Mr. Dulles then estimated that the situation in Laos was moving closer to all-out civil war. Phoumi is carrying out limited military operations from Savannakhet in the narrow neck of the country as a part of his threatened offensive action against the government. Souvanna Phouma's forces are moving to Luang Prabang and are now less than 80 miles from the city. One column has defected to Phoumi and no serious conflict has taken place. On the political side, efforts to unseat Souvanna Phouma continue. Phoui and Phoumi are endeavoring to induce a majority of the members of the National Assembly to go to Luang Prabang to form a new government of national safety which would bring together all the anti-Communist forces in the country. One difficulty with this scheme is the reluctance of the King to take decisive action. Mr. Dulles believed the King was anti-Communist and favored Phoumi and that if he acted decisively, the Laotian situation might yet be worked out. However, if the King did not act decisively, there was danger of civil war. Meanwhile, Souvanna Phouma was sending good-will missions to Hanoi and Peiping. The Soviet Ambassador had recently made a trip from Cambodia to Laos where he had agreed to furnish Laos with oil and relief supplies. Five IL–14s (Soviet aircraft) were due to arrive in Hanoi today for supply flights to Laos. These planes had the same numbers as Soviet planes which had been seen in the Congo not long ago, leading Mr. Dulles to conclude that the Soviets apparently had a contingent of emergency planes for use in operations of this kind." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, December 2; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

Soviet Ambassador Abramov arrived in Vientiane on November 22, met with Souvanna Phouma, and extended an offer of 250,000 gallons of fuel, and milk, flour, sugar, and other foodstuffs as a "goodwill gift" to be flown in from Hanoi and Haiphong. Abramov did not stay in Vientiane, but Anatoly Ratanov remained as Chargé d'Affaires, the first permanent Soviet representative to Laos. (Telegram 982 from Vientiane, November 23; Department of State, Central Files, 851J.0061/11–2360)

470. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Merchant) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons)[1]

Washington, December 1, 1960.

This morning following the NSC meeting,[2] I gave Mr. Dillon a summary of our discussion with Defense yesterday morning concerning Laos.[3] I also gave him to read the draft telegram to CINCPAC[4] submitted to us yesterday by Defense subsequent to our meeting. I told him you and I approved it but only provided that two additional lines (providing for prior reference to Washington) were added to the message. Mr. Dillon approved the draft telegram thus amended and agreed that prior reference here was indispensable. I mentioned that our reluctant agreement to authority to move as far as Paksane rested in part on our understanding that the terrain was such that there was no defensible stopping point short of Paksane once the river was crossed, and in part on the military desirability of holding a bridgehead across the river as a basis for a possible later advance to Vientiane. In this connection, I pointed out the fortunate circumstance from our point of view that the current fighting had broken out twenty miles south of the truce line, and hence the onus for it could be clearly placed on the Kong Le forces, with the result that crossing the river in pursuit, if the Phoumi forces were successful in the action, did not have the same serious connotation that would have followed from an initiation of fighting by Phoumi having started from the truce line itself.

Subsequent to having informed you of the above conversation with Mr. Dillon, Mr. Irwin called to say that he had just had some new language for the final two lines laid before him which had originated in the State Department. In this redraft, it was a substitution of "major thrust to Paksane" for the original words "major thrust to the north" which I had told him before the NSC meeting you and I interpreted as meaning the launching of a movement to Vientiane. (In that earlier conversation, Mr. Irwin told me that our original two-line addition was acceptable to him.) Mr. Irwin and I thereupon agreed over the

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–160. Top Secret.

[2] See *supra*.

[3] No record of this meeting has been found.

[4] Presumably a draft of a telegram from the JCS through CINCPAC to the PEO representatives in Laos with a copy sent to Vientiane. The Department of State summarized this draft JCS telegram for Brown in the last paragraph of telegram 571, *infra*. This message was subsequently revised; see footnote 7, Document 474.

telephone that we would let our two staffs work further on language until either they reached agreement or produced a clear-cut issue which he and I could then consider.

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471. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 1, 1960—9:35 p.m.

571. Following is assessment our problems and necessary courses action underlying recent instructions emanating from Washington.

Essential problem is to get a legal government of Laos which unlike present Souvanna Phouma government will resist Commie efforts to take over country by political subversion or by military action. No Government of Laos can do this without united army and leadership strongly backed by Western nations and supported by substantial US assistance. Conversely Western support and US assistance most difficult unless there is a properly oriented Lao Government to support.

We are at present moment faced with precarious situation in which Souvanna's own declared objectives coincide with PL objectives of (1) creating Communist inclined RLG, (2) preventing political action to form westward leaning government, (3) ensuring success by use or threat of force.

Thus, Souvanna backed by PL is (1) seeking meeting in Luang Prabang to extract agreement of anti-Communist elements to inclusion NLHX in government and Communist leaning policies, (2) threatening military action against Luang Prabang and at least harassing action against Phoumi forces in South as means pressuring non- and anti-Communist acquiescence in his plans.

Our efforts to implement plan now in process of execution for King to call meeting of non-Communist leaders and National Assembly in Luang Prabang to constitutionally replace Souvanna government with westward leaning government can succeed only if combined Souvanna–PL threat or use of force can be substantially neutralized. This is why essential we continue supply Luang Prabang

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–160. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Usher and cleared in draft by Merchant, Parsons, and SEA. Repeated to Bangkok, London, Paris, Canberra, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

forces and Savannakhet forces; this is why essential try to maintain Phoumi forces in readiness to take appropriate military action, such as a diversion in South to take pressure off Luang Prabang.

On other hand, if Phoumi forces anticipate military action by Souvanna–PL forces in such manner as to make difficult denial charge he initiated civil war while Souvanna still heads legal government, we (1) might destroy prospect for constitutional political action at Luang Prabang to form westward leaning government, (2) risk having British, French and Australians accuse us of duplicity since we have requested them make démarches to Souvanna against any attack on Luang Prabang, (3) might court an appeal to the UN or ICC and a consequent restriction on further US assistance to non-Communist forces, and gravely change US world posture.

Success in our policy requires careful balancing of equally fluid political and military situations.

Thus, as this message is drafted Somsanith delegation and Phoumi [*Phoui?*] group have arrived in Savannakhet for discussions with Phoumi–Boun Oum group with view petitioning King to call meeting at Luang Prabang. Phoumi has himself asked King to call meeting and has promised to come himself provided NLHX excluded. Southep units have apparently switched allegiance to Luang Prabang coup group, while other two columns of forces sent toward Luang Prabang are some distance south of that city. Degree of concentration of PL in area of LP is unknown. Skirmishing between Phoumi and Vientiane forces is taking place South of Nam Ca Dinh river.

As situation appears from here at moment offsetting of Souvanna–PL military threat seems require (1) Phoumi action to gain favorable position on Nam Ca Dinh and be ready move toward Paksane if necessary to counter RLG/PL military threats, and (2) adequate supply to Luang Prabang forces even though this requires use CAT planes. As situation moves politically in our favor danger of significant military action from Souvanna–PL forces increases. Therefore anti-Communist forces must be ready to act quickly to forestall a military solution favoring RLG/PL.

Dillon

472. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 2, 1960—11 p.m.

1042. Personal for Assistant Secretary Parsons. You must realize that Deptels 571[2] and 572[3] put me in an impossible position. In my messages 1005 and 1014[4] I put two clear questions to Department. Is CINCPAC to be permitted to give instructions about operations in Laos without going through the Ambassador? Will Washington modify an outstanding CINCPAC instruction which I feel detrimental to US interests? Neither question has been really answered, especially the second. The CINCPAC instruction is still outstanding and I think it is wrong. I feel that as Ambassador I am entitled (A) to a clear answer on a question of major importance to our whole policy in Laos, and (B) not to have someone else giving orders on matters of major importance in the country for which I am supposed to be responsible.

Perhaps someone else can operate under these conditions. I cannot.

Brown

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–260. Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution. Received at 1 p.m.

[2] *Supra.*

[3] Telegram 572, December 1, concurred in the importance of routing "important policy decisions through Ambassador as matter principle. This particularly important in view extreme delicacy present situation and rapid interplay political and military events throughout country." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–260)

[4] Dated November 28 and 29. (*Ibid.*, 751J.5–MSP/11–2760 and 751J.00/11–2960; both included in the microfiche supplement)

473. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 2, 1960—11 p.m.

1043. For Deputy Under Secy Merchant and Asst Secy Parsons. Ref: Deptels 571[2] and 572.[3] Regret reftels, though I fully agree their

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–260. Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution. Received at 2:08 p.m.

[2] Document 471.

[3] See footnote 3, *supra.*

analysis situation, do not answer questions presented Embtels 1005 and 1014.[4]

(1) I recommended we tell Phoumi not cross Nam Ca Dinh at this juncture political negotiations and that CINCPAC instructions to Brownfield encourage Phoumi do so be rescinded. Reftels do not answer this. Since CINCPAC instruction still stands and conditions still such that Phoumi crossing would defeat chances peaceful solution I feel I must repeat my request.

(2) My second question raised problem who on spot decides careful balance fluid political and military factors referred to Deptel 571? Reftels fail clarify this. I would like to know where I stand. At present I have responsibility but not authority, because someone else is giving orders of crucial importance to PEO reps in Laos through separate channels, without necessity my concurrence or even opportunity comment, e.g., whether it is good or bad from viewpoint US interest for Phoumi to cross Nam Ca Dinh. This seems to me question for Ambassador or Dept to decide and, if latter, decision to be carried out through Ambassador.

Please advise.

Brown

[4] See footnote 4, *supra.*

474. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 2, 1960—7:48 p.m.

578. For Ambassador Brown from Parsons. Re Embtel 1042 and 1043.[2]

1. I have been deeply distressed by situation which developed consequent to JCS 986140 of November 21[3] which dispatched after high level State–Defense decisions communicated Deptel 539.[4] CINCPAC's subsequent directives have been within authority then

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–260. Secret; Niact; Eyes Only; No Distribution. Drafted by Parsons and cleared with SEA and Merchant.

[2] Document 472 and *supra.*

[3] See footnote 5, Document 464.

[4] Document 464.

granted but this does not mean we condone violation of principle that major decisions should be communicated through Ambassador and Chief of PEO.

2. CINCPAC's 282316Z[5] closed with request for JCS confirmation. You will note confirmation not yet forthcoming. This is because State Dept. has been obdurate and has threatened go to top unless JCS response explicitly makes clear that operations must in present circumstances be limited and that CINCPAC directives regarding them must be referred to Washington for prior approval.

3. Foregoing should make clear that all of us here agree with your concern "not to have someone else giving orders on matters of major importance" bypassing Ambassador. Deptel 572[6] expressed this concurrence. At same time you must realize that even if we could accept good faith of Souvanna decision not to attack Luang Prabang such decision can and probably would be taken by others despite him, i.e. Pathet Lao and associates. Military posture and action therefore extremely important and we here agree that diversionary effort to prevent concentration against Luang Prabang is important. We also agree that if attack occurs southern forces must move fast toward Vientiane. However we also agree with you that despite extreme difficulty and delicacy of coordination as between military and political moves former must not be allowed destroy chances for political solution which we are seeking and that Souvanna and Pathet Lao should bear onus for initiation civil war.

4. Difficult or perhaps intolerable as it may seem to you in peculiar fragmented Lao circumstances, we do have to live with need to reconcile civil and military sides of our Government. Should, despite all our efforts, there be civil war, CINCPAC and JCS will bear brunt of whatever follows and we cannot afford ignore their views on matters on which they are best qualified. Nevertheless I repeat that Ambassador and Department must not be bypassed and we have fought major battle on this issue these past 72 hours. I hope JCS message, which may clear out tonight, will be satisfactory on your point A and that it plus Deptel 572 as well as this message will give you (and also Heintges) some comfort on point B.[7]

Dillon

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[5] Not found.

[6] See footnote 3, Document 472.

[7] In telegram 1048 from Vientiane, December 3, Brown expressed appreciation for the Department's support of him and Heintges. He added: "Revised JCS directive received today and appreciated." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–360) The JCS directive has not been found.

475. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 6, 1960—8:42 p.m.

595. In view fluidity Lao situation prefer oral reply to Souvanna note.[2] Apart from reason set forth final paragraph Embtel 1067[3] oral reply preferable so as to (a) retain maximum flexibility and (b) minimize impact on Thai, Vietnamese, and Lao who are against present RLG. You should therefore take following line.

1. As recommended Embtel 1067 you should thank Souvanna for his clarification and inform him that as matter of fact since his oral explanation to you on November 30 no arms or ammunition have in fact been brought into country. However in view press distortions in Laos and elsewhere as to timing and nature of aid supplied, you are under instructions to correct record where necessary by briefing local correspondents and that Department will make available same rectifications here on advice from you. (You may in your discretion give correspondents info in numbered paragraphs 1 and 2 of Embtel 1062[4] but should inform Department at once so as to eliminate any danger of complication or discrepancy at this end.) You may also tell Souvanna that you have authority to give to press substance or full text of US note of November 28 if required to clarify US position.

2. You should inform Souvanna that we note that he has approved continuing aid to FAL in form of pay, food, medicines, gasoline, clothing, etc. We must request his assurances that he would not impose procedural obstacles in regard to foregoing and would cooperate fully in effecting pay to all FAL troops. In this context you should seek his agreement on use normal pay procedures, that is, documents to be sent to Vientiane and FAL paymasters to take pay to regions.

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[1] Source: Department of State, 751J.5–MSP/12–660. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons and cleared with SEA and in substance with Merchant. Also sent priority to Bangkok and repeated to Canberra, London, Paris, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Reference is apparently to the Lao Foreign Ministry note of December 2 replying to the U.S. note of November 28. The December 2 note clarified the Lao note of November 22 requesting suspension of aid to rebels, and stated that while non-military aid could go to all regions of Laos, military aid must only be granted to troops remaining loyal to the legal government. (Telegram 1055 from Vientiane, December 5; *ibid.*)

[3] Brown suggested in the last paragraph of telegram 1067, December 6, that if the United States disregarded Souvanna's request, it should not send a written reply, but tell him orally that since November 30 no U.S. arms or munitions had been brought into Laos. (*Ibid.*; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] Paragraphs 1 and 2 of telegram 1062, December 6, contained press guidance in response to charges in the *Lao Presse* that rebel troops attacking Nam Ca Dinh were advised and supplied by the United States. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–660)

3. Souvanna should be told that possibility US influencing Phoumi is to large extent dependent upon assistance, including pay, given his troops. Souvanna himself has interest in seeing that all FAL troops are paid as otherwise no effective forces will remain to protect Laos from PL and Viet Minh. Furthermore in view common interest Souvanna and ourselves in preventing civil war it essential effect payment promptly as otherwise there is risk that those forces might take desperate action in order to obtain that which action of RLG is withholding from them.

4. You should inform Souvanna that his request that we not supply arms and ammunition to forces in most of regions 1, 2, 3, and 4 gives us serious concern in view current confusion as to who is attacking whom. There are currently numerous reports including some from PL sources of PL attacks upon FAL. Furthermore in action in Nam Ca Dinh area, which presumably precipitated Souvanna's request, our info was that fighting started when Vientiane forces or PL professing to side with Vientiane forces attacked Phoumi troops on November 25 (15–20 miles south of truce line of Nam Ca Dinh). Furthermore at times Souvanna himself has denied validity of cease-fire in that area. Accordingly, in view continuing need of Laos for effective forces in being, US would regret see RLG follow policy of denying FAL means with which to defend itself.

5. You may add in your discretion that you and your Government do not consider anti-Communist factions in various regions as disloyal or non-patriotic but rather as people genuinely concerned by trend of events. Souvanna himself knows better than we can tell him how much disquiet exists not only in countryside but also even in Vientiane. This nothing which US has created or could have created but is evidently result of series of developments in which PL and elements friendly to PL have steadily expanded their influence and authority. Furthermore, if Souvanna's mood permits, he could be reminded that it obvious Lao in other regions are concerned by evidence of duress on Assembly such as occurred December 2 and they cannot be sure there has not been similar duress during earlier crises. Very fact that Assembly has not thus far been permitted meet outside Vientiane is indication that there is concern Assembly would take actions unfavorable to PL and elements close to PL were it free to do so. We assume that this must concern Souvanna deeply because he must recognize that long desired national reconciliation can only be effected peacefully if Assembly is permitted to play its constitutional role. While US Government is sure responsibility for preventing exercise of this role rests with PL and sympathizers who led leftist mob, this too must trouble Souvanna as mob action constitutes evidence that will of Souvanna

himself as well as that of Assembly can be thwarted at any moment agitators so desire.[5]

Herter

[5] In telegram 594 to Vientiane, December 6, the Department of State sent further instructions to Brown, concluding: "FYI. Our obvious desire is to retain free hand but seek avoid Souvanna pinning us down. End FYI." (*Ibid.;* included in the microfiche supplement)

476. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 7, 1960—11 p.m.

1081. CINCPAC for POLAD. Addressees pass interested agencies.

A. Situation moving very rapidly but many key elements still confused.

1. Phoumi has apparently captured Pak Cadinh and is moving on Paksane in pursuit retreating Vientiane forces.

2. Phoumi has now designated Kouprasith as principal coordinator various coup efforts Vientiane with Boun Oum as political advisor. Indications are various coup activities well under way.

3. Meanwhile government forces have got wind of some impending attack on city, possibly based according French sources on reports Phoumi forces sighted across Mekong. Security precautions have been tightened. Operational contacts with Kouprasith, Ngon and others becoming increasingly difficult for us.

4. PL radio is claiming LP surrounded and Souvanna told Addis his troops hold hills around LP. Souvanna told me however he had withdrawn his troops from LP and Bounleuth's intelligence [*document number not declassified*][2] confirm this. CH/PEO and ARMA believe Phoumi forces now LP have capability hold city successfully against PL forces presently reported in vicinity LP. Phoumi apparently shares this view, to extent at least that he is willing withdraw first paratrooper company from LP for use against Vientiane.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–760. Top Secret; Priority. Repeated to Bangkok, Paris, London, Canberra, Phnom Penh, Saigon, and CINCPAC.

[2] Not found.

5. Problem exfiltrating deputies growing increasingly difficult with tighter security in Vientiane, seven key deputies under varying degrees surveillance, and torn between feeling their part they can best serve here and fear or hesitation take physical and political risks for selves and families involved in departure now especially since Phoumi advance on Vientiane seems hold out hope its early liberation.

6. King continues reluctant act, presumably hoping Phoumi capture of Vientiane will get him off hook and avoid necessity his taking any categoric action.

7. Phoui, though probably still useful as negotiator, has not shown himself effective force. At last reading, he seemed favor coalition government with PL and retention Souvanna as Prime Minister.

B. 1. It thus appears that a series of events, some of our own doing, have created a situation which is now largely out of our control and which is carrying us down the road of a military solution rather than our preferred path, that of a political solution.

2. Our posture until today was that Phoumi should stop and consolidate his positions at or just north of Nam Cadinh. In lieu of asking Soviet military aid Souvanna has asked me tell Phoumi stay south this river. I have reminded Phoumi of JCS directive. Phoumi now authorized move northward in support of coup activities Vientiane as advised by CH/PEO and subject my concurrence.

3. I see little prospect on horizon of a negotiated solution or action by assembly which will legally transfer power quickly to a new government. Even if we successfully urge Phoumi stop at or before Paksane, Souvanna has said no meeting at LP. Phoumi certainly will not come Vientiane. Quick exfiltration sufficient deputies to get quorum outside Vientiane unlikely. Petition for assembly meeting LP signed by majority deputies is more likely, though whether King, now beguiled by prospect Phoumi capture Vientiane, will act on it is doubtful. Such action is however only hope negotiated solution.

4. Prolonged stalemate (whether political or military) also has serious risks. It gives time for Souvanna to ask and receive military aid from Soviets, though he is reported [*document number not declassified*][3] thus far to have refused to do so. It gives chance for request or offer of aid from ChiComs. It uses up the precious time during which we do not have to breach Souvanna's request not give military aid to Phoumi. We could at any time be confronted by request remove PEO personnel.

5. Through all this, Souvanna shows not slightest sign of resigning, nor Phoumi of waiting for negotiations.

[3] Reference is to the document cited in footnote 2 above.

6. Military action has its disadvantages, chief among them loss of Lao life. It will force us into increasingly difficult decisions on degree of support to Phoumi forces. Unless very quickly successful, it could well lead to de facto situation of two governments with US supporting one and everybody else the other. It could lead to call for UN intervention, or to request for forces from Commie bloc if and when our support to Phoumi becomes unmistakably intervention. (We are receiving increasing evidence of careful preparation of case (UN or World Court) establishing US interference through collection specific examples. Many of these are false. But some, unfortunately, are true.) It can precipitate PL attacks with concomitant series of difficult support decisions for us.

C. 1. Though there is no really satisfactory solution to situation, best practical possibility would appear to be combination Phoumi pressure on Vientiane forces accompanied by successful coup Vientiane as contemplated by JCS directive 986852[4] with which I fully concur. This could permit Phoumi forces walk in relatively peacefully and should lead to resignation government through vote of Assembly backed by King. Considerable trouble with PL here and elsewhere would however be likely. There is unfortunately not much we can do to help with coup except pass messages, which we are doing.

2. We should try keep Phoumi from open attack Vientiane city until after coup and refrain from overt support his forces such as CAT aircraft for troop lifter or supply forward areas.

3. We should also continue efforts encourage signatures petition for LP Assembly meeting and exfiltration where possible, though this getting increasingly difficult as surveillance grown.

4. We should again send message King urging King call Assembly meeting LP and pointing out again that transfer power to new legal government is essential permit full and open US support. If quorum deputies cannot get [out] LP we should then urge King to act himself to dislodge Souvanna and appoint someone else, despite fact this could lead to two governments with US not freed from recognition of one to recognize the other.

Brown

[4] Not found.

477. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 7, 1960.

IN 13693. Ref: Out 50265.[2] To Asst Sec State Parsons from Ambassador Brown. As appears from Embtel 1081[3] I fully concur idea your mesasge to King. Phoui, however, now in Savannakhet. Will try to arrange his travel Luang Prabang. If he is not available would you object have message delivered by Khamphan Panya or most effective interlocutor Methven can find? Hope my suggested revision of your note as oral message from you to King, thought necessary in order permit its delivery by other interlocutor than Phoui, is not violation your basic intent.

I believe it would help to have Phoumi's immediate support and with your permission will request Corcoran or Hasey brief Phoumi orally and suggest his strong support.

Discussion here brought out two suggested modifications:

(1) It was thought advantage could be gained through playing up RLG inability administer aid effectively and lack prospect thereof.

(2) Reftel indicates (A) our lack confidence in King's ability obtain Assembly quorum outside Vientiane, (B) our belief coup would provide most preferable alternate means establishing and legitimizing new govt and (C) possible necessity if neither (A) or (B) works that King appoint Royal Govt. The message has been revised to suggest this sequence. Events may of course overtake and render sequence obsolete.

Substance message to be passed orally to interlocutor follows and your instruction requested:

1. Should be asked convey Sec Parsons' personal respects to His Majesty and say that Sec Parsons recalls with pleasure audience granted him his recent visit.

2. Should continue by indicating Mr. Parsons' expression strong interest of United States in helping the Kingdom preserve its independence and in continuing the economic, military, and moral aid to the Kingdom necessary to that end.

3. His Majesty, Sec Parsons hopes, will understand that the United States continues desirous as always give support to anti-Communist Laos but this will require urgent political action on part of King

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Pol Affairs, Dec 1–10, Laos. Secret; Operational Immediate. Also sent to Bangkok. This telegram [*1 line of text not declassified*]. The source text is undated but was presumably sent on December 7.

[2] Not further identified.

[3] *Supra.*

and other anti-Communist Lao because point has now been reached where government, which is widely recognized as government of country, has formally requested that anti-Communist forces, who are regarded legally as having status of rebels, be deprived of arms and ammunition which they need if they are to defend independence of the Kingdom. It remains for Lao patriots to decide if this is fate they wish for Army and for their country.

4. Sec Parsons appreciates that His Majesty will have noted that the existing conditions, particularly in view of the government's note of Dec 2,[4] make the rendering of effective assistance virtually impossible without placing the United States in an internationally untenable situation. It appears extremely doubtful that the present government can any longer hope to re-establish conditions under which the Kingdom at large can receive the benefit of American aid. Even with such aid as is being rendered it appears unlikely that the government will be able to maintain the independence of the country.

5. If His Majesty wishes such aid as the United States can provide be continued we strongly hope that His Majesty will deign to call a meeting of the National Assembly and non-Communist Lao leaders at Luang Prabang at the earliest possible moment to bring about a government which will permit the effective distribution of American aid, and at the same time take a firm position against further PL encroachment and further dependence upon Soviet Union and international Communists.

6. Sec Parsons understands that the possibility exists that the National Assembly and non-Communist leaders might not be able to assemble a quorum in Luang Prabang. He understands further that rumors have been reported of intentions on the part of certain patriotic leaders, if the convocation of the Assembly in Luang Prabang is prevented by force, to meet force by force to establish a new government in Vientiane, better able to guarantee the free exercise of Constitutional procedures.

7. Should, in their turn, such intentions not materialize, Sec Parsons hopes that His Majesty, considering the dangers which each delay greatly augments, will not hesitate to exercise that responsible leadership which a people expect their Monarch to assume in times of national crisis, by appointing directly an effective government of His Majesty's own choosing, which could be subject to approval or revision by the Assembly once the Kingdom has been effectively reunited by this government.

[4] See footnote 2, Document 475.

8. Sec Parsons wishes to assure His Majesty of the continued respect and confidence which the people and government of the United States place in His Majesty and their hope for the privilege of continuing their aid to his Kingdom in its struggle to maintain its integrity and independence.

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478. Telegram From the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Parsons) to the Ambassador in Laos (Brown)[1]

Washington, December 7, 1960.

Your 1081[2] not yet received.

I much preferred message to and through Phoui because I had excuse of Tokyo talk in which he expressed need for action and by working through Phoui I thus avoided direct intervention which in my Washington position could be awkward. If Phoui not available sufficiently soon I would still not want Khamphan Panya give message from me to King both because he might distort it to suit his taste and because he might in some way later try to use fact of my action as lever against us for his own ends.

As to text, King has always been so allergic to taking unconstitutional action I prefer avoid in this message request to do so. Also doubt I should reveal knowledge of possible coup action. Therefore request deletion numbered paragraphs 6 and 7. Should be recalled that unusual action of message from me likely have more impact than actual content.

I agree your suggestion we should seek General Phoumi's immediate support and therefore suggest you have Savannakhet brief him and also Phoui expressing hope latter will act as intermediary with King (which assumes you would have aircraft available to take him to LP). In view stronger language than I had contemplated re bleak prospect of no more aid to Laos unless King acts, I would think it important in briefing Phoui and Phoumi to make sure they understand

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[1] Source: Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Pol Affairs, Dec 1–10, Laos. Secret. Drafted by Parsons. According to a covering memorandum from Parsons to Merchant, December 8, this telegram was sent to Vientiane on the night of December 7. [*1 line of text not declassified*]

[2] Document 476.

this is a ploy to try to get King to act and in no way implies any slackening our desire find some way to continue our support of anti-Communist elements.

To summarize please exhaust all possibility using Phoui and in no event deliver through Khamphan Panya. If Phoui unavailable please recommend best alternative. Message must of course be delivered orally.

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479. Editorial Note

During the early hours of the morning of December 8, troops under the command of Colonel Kouprasith Abhay seized control of Vientiane in a bloodless coup. Leaflets which were dropped on Vientiane in support of the military takeover proclaimed that the coup was in support of Souvanna Phouma, the King, and neutrality. At General Phoumi's headquarters, the Kouprasith coup was described publicly as a seizure of power from Souvanna. (Joint Situation Report 120, December 8, [*document number not declassified*]; Eisenhower Library, White House Office Files, Staff Secretary Records, International Series, Laos Situation Reports; included in the microfiche supplement)

The Director of Intelligence and Research, Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., sent Secretary Herter an intelligence note, December 8, on the implications of the Kouprasith coup. The note, which Herter saw, concluded that Kouprasith had shown no abiding loyalty to anyone and probably acted so that he could have influence in the eventual disposition of power in Laos. Cumming's note stated that while Kouprasith had voiced sympathy for Souvanna, criticized Phoumi, and expressed doubts about Kong Le, he would probably align himself with the winner in Laos when the outcome became clear. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–860; included in the microfiche supplement)

At the 469th meeting of the National Security Council, December 8, Allen Dulles briefed the Council on the coup in Laos as part of his usual briefing, "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security":

"Mr. Dulles said that a typical Laotian coup d'etat had taken place in Vientiane, typical because it was well-advertised in advance. It was not clear at this moment which side was in control of the Government of Laos. Apparently Colonel Kouprasith was the leader of the coup. This officer had been in touch with Phoumi, but after the coup, he had scattered leaflets favoring Phouma. Secretary Herter said the information being received by the State Department was also confusing. Gen-

eral Lemnitzer asked whether information was not coming from Souvanna Phouma, in which case it might be slanted toward the Left. [2 *lines of source text not declassified*] Mr. Douglas asked whether the coup was an anti-Kong Le coup. Mr. Dulles said Kong Le had been seen in the office of the Prime Minister after the coup took place." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, December 8; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

Secretary Herter sent President Eisenhower the following information on December 8, which, according to a note by John S. D. Eisenhower, the President read:

"I thought you would appreciate the following portion of an official announcement broadcast over the Lao Government radio today:

" 'You are requested to remain calm and to support Government and this coup. We adhere to following: "Do not bruise a lotus flower; do not muddy clearwater; do not anger a frog; do not harm a small frog." ' " (Letter from Herter to the President, December 8; *ibid.*, Dulles–Herter Series)

On December 9, John Eisenhower sent the President the following synopsis of State and intelligence material on Laos:

"The disappointing coup of yesterday in which Kouprasith took over the city for a while appears to have been reversed. Kouprasith, contrary to Phoumi's expectations, immediately began issuing statements of support for Souvanna when the coup was executed. Now Kong Le apparently has taken over control once more and has arrested Kouprasith. On the favorable side, Phoumi forces are approaching Vientiane from the east. He has taken Paksane and has dropped an airborne company at Chinaimo. Many of the deputies from Vientiane have now reached Chinaimo and can pass over into Thailand for airlifting to Luang Prabang.

"There is a possibility that the King can assemble a quorum in the parliament at Luang Prabang and give Souvanna a vote of no confidence. On the military side, the Pathet Lao are expected to support Kong Le against Phoumi in a showdown." (*Ibid.*, Eisenhower Diaries)

480. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 8, 1960—8:03 p.m.

603. We are fully aware of political risks to which we expose ourselves in UN and elsewhere by our hand excessively showing in current military operations and political maneuverings. We have admittedly been taking risks on political front and believe we must continue to do so. On basis information to date Department has approved your refusal participation CAT aircraft in Phoumi troop lift into Vientiane area which we consider consistent with outstanding directives. Nevertheless success or failure of efforts overthrow Souvanna may depend on ability move Phoumi forces with maximum speed. Accordingly you are authorized at any time where you feel acceptance additional political risk justified by chances achieving result we desire to authorize use CAT aircraft for such purposes as you in your discretion decide. Defense concurs.

Herter

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–860. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. Drafted by Merchant at 5:45 p.m. on December 8 and approved by SEA, in draft by Irwin and Parsons, and in substance by Lemnitzer. Repeated niact to Bangkok and CINCPAC.

At the Secretary's Staff Meeting on December 9, 9:15 a.m., Parsons and Cummings briefed the group on the situation in Laos. Parsons observed that Kong Le openly controlled Vientiane and Souvanna's claim to authority was "ridiculous." Parsons stated that he envisioned two possible actions by the Kong Le–pro-Communist group: a request for reinforcements from North Vietnam in the event of an outright military struggle or an appeal to the United Nations. Parsons hoped that the National Assembly might vote the Souvanna government out of office and establish a new one. During the meeting, Herter approved sending this telegram. (*Ibid.*, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75)

481. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 8, 1960—8:05 p.m.

604. Should situation develop favorably following is check list of urgent desiderata to be accomplished with cooperation of friendly government authorities:

1. Authority use CAT airlift.
2. Authority supply arms, ammo all friendly forces.
3. Release kip for pay troops, police, civil servants, etc.
4. Cancellation mission to Peiping–Hanoi.
5. Movement to Savannakhet or Luang Prabang of deputies at Chinaimo.
6. Assembly action to replace present government with one dominated by Phoumi–Phoui and royal approval thereof.
7. Declaration of neutrality (albeit Westward leaning, and in such a form as not to preclude assistance needed from West).
8. Offer to negotiate "national reconciliation" with NLHX (not with expectation of settlement but to avert if possible widespread armed insurgency while RLG unstable and country weak).

We would also expect to stimulate expressions of support for new government by UK, Australia and other friends of Laos and of hope country may be allowed live in peace without outside interference.[2]

Herter

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–860. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons and cleared by SEA. Repeated to Bangkok, Saigon, Phnom Penh, London, Paris, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In telegram 624 to Vientiane, December 12, the Department of State added two additional items to the list of desiderata:

"1. Request by new government that USSR stop airlift to Vientiane.

"2. Withdrawal of RLG's recognition of Soviet Government with earliest departure Soviet Ambassador and staff." (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–1260)

482. Telegram From the Embassy in Laos to the Department of State[1]

Vientiane, December 9, 1960—7 p.m.

1102. Ref Deptel 603.[2]

1. Situation of Vientiane is one of a capital still outwardly in hands of Souvanna govt, with forces in rebel status on its outskirts mixed with Kouprasith forces. Souvanna has said privately to British Amb, however, that he is powerless and will leave country at first clash of forces. Paratroopers appear control city and airfield.

2. Phoumi paras are still jumping Chinaimo from FAL aircraft, albeit more slowly than optimum. He should have completed airlift three companies First Para Battalion from LP to Chinaimo by this evening. Phoumi aircraft plans begin lift troops from Paksane to Chinaimo tomorrow. Two new FAL aircraft for Phoumi will be available Dec 12.

3. Souvanna has declared Vientiane open city. Kouprasith told ARMA he does not intend attack city, unless attacked. If attacked he will fight. Kong Le's intentions less certain. Rumors he plans attack unconfirmed. Kong Le and Souvanna left Presidency telling newsmen they were going Chinaimo to see Kouprasith to try avert clash.

4. Kouprasith advises he not short food Chinaimo.

5. By nightfall over fourth deputies including Somsanith should be in Savannakhet. I authorized CAT aircraft lift them there from Udorn. We are urging King give open approval their meeting outside Vientiane or LP. Corcoran proceeding Savannakhet today to make contact deputies and do everything possible get action for new govt. Pushing Assembly meeting should be a priority now.

6. Radio Vientiane at 0945 carried Committee Peace Neutrality statement charging interference by US and Thailand in support Phoumi. *Lao Presse* has violent article same effect.

7. Still feel it vital we continue protect US international position by keeping CAT aircraft out of Vientiane picture as long as possible. Quite a case of interference being built up against us as it is. But most of this we can answer. US airlift of troops to Vientiane could not be answered.

8. One way, however, of substantially helping Phoumi would be use CAT aircrat to lift reinforcements from Savannakhet to LP, to replace forces he has sent from there to Vientiane, thus releasing his aircraft for Vientiane operation, and protecting LP against risk attack

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–960. Top Secret; Niact; Limit Distribution. A corrected version of this telegram indicates that it was repeated to Bangkok.

[2] Document 479.

by PL. Chief PEO, ARMA [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] feel important get reinforcement LP soonest since these forces have to be landed and not dropped. If PL commanded airfield they could prevent landing. This trooplift would immediately become known to French in LP who busy collecting evidence against us, so international risk also great. Nevertheless, we could claim this action against PL, whom Souvanna admitted to me yesterday he could not control, and not against RLG since no RLG forces would be opposing or in vicinity and for protection of King.

9. You should know that Quinim left by Beaver this afternoon. His French pilot told us his destination was Hanoi. Dept will have to weigh relevance and significance this development.

10. Therefore, despite evidence prospects our being arraigned in UN are real, and military situation so uncertain, prospect Assembly action so promising, and international consequences of such action so serious, I feel strain on Phoumi effort needs relief and this, though dangerous, is least risky manner accomplishing this. I have instructed Bangkok prepare three CAT planes for this airlift early morning Dec 10. Please advise emergency niact if you disagree.[3]

Brown

[3] In telegram 821 to Vientiane, December 9, the Department informed Brown that it concurred. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–960)

483. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 10, 1969—5:39 p.m.

617. Re Deptel 603[2] (not sent Phnom Penh). Seen here flight of Souvanna Phouma and all non-leftist members his government not only from city but from country,[3] with resultant further bi-polarization towards Pathet Lao and Savannakhet of situation in Vientiane area, on the one hand somewhat reduces political risk which would be involved in CAT airlift to that area and on other hand greatly enhances

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1060. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Parsons, cleared by SEA, and approved by Merchant. Repeated niact to Bangkok, priority to Phnom Penh and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 480.

[3] Souvanna and most of his Cabinet left Vientiane for Phnom Penh in the early evening of December 9.

need for urgent buildup Kouprasith–Phoumi forces (Embtel 1112).[4] We do not at moment have clear picture of size, composition or ETA of Phoumi forces which may be proceeding overland from Nam Ca Dinh, Xieng Khouang or other areas, or which mght be coming upriver or even across Thailand. In terms of additional FAL C-47 airlift available to Phoumi and of paratroopers still available for airdrop are you satisfied that augmentation of airlift by use of CAT not necessary at this moment? We rely on your judgment under existing directives.

Herter

[4] In telegram 1112, December 10, the Embassy reported that General Sounthone had summoned the diplomatic corps to the Presidency at 11:30 a.m. and informed them that the departed Souvanna government had delegated all military and civilian power to a committee of military men headed by him. The Embassy added the following comment: "Would seem best play at present would be maintain cease-fire and open city until Phoumi builds up sufficient forces to be in overwhelming position and action can be taken via Assembly for formation of new government." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1060)

484. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower)[1]

Washington, December 12, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF STATE AND INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Laos

Military reinforcements for a possible attack on Vientiane by General Phoumi apparently are continuing to arrive in that area. In the capital itself, an extreme leftist cabinet minister, Quinim Pholsena, reportedly has taken charge of the government in the absence of Souvanna and the remainder of his cabinet. Souvanna, now in Phnom Penh, is said by his associates to be planning to send some cabinet members to Hanoi, Moscow, and Peiping to seek active support for the neutralization of Laos as formerly proposed by Cambodian chief of state Prince Sihanouk. Meanwhile, reliable sources on 11 December observed four howitzers, approximately equivalent to US 105-mm

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

howitzers, being unloaded from two Soviet aircraft at Vientiane airfield; this matériel, probably the forerunner of other supplies, may have been arranged for during Quinim Pholsena's recent trip to Hanoi.

We feel the flight of Phouma and all non-leftist members of his government, with the resultant polarization toward the Pathet Lao and Savannakhet of the situation in the Vientiane area, on the one hand somewhat reduces the political risk which would be involved in a CAT airlift to that area, and on the other hand greatly enhances the need for an urgent buildup of the Kouprasith–Phoumi forces. Augmentation of the airlift is left to Brown's judgment.

[Here follows material unrelated to Laos.]

Laos—continued

King Savang in Luang Prabang is reliably reported to have signed on 12 December a royal ordinance ousting the Souvanna Phouma government and temporarily transferring all powers to General Phoumi's Savannakhet Revolutionary Committee. This action followed a National Assembly vote of no confidence against Souvanna, taken at a meeting in Savannakhet. It appears that the deputies will soon go to Luang Prabang, where the King has convoked a special session of the assembly to deal with the formation of a new government. The most likely choice to be the new premier is Prince Boun Oum, co-leader with Phoumi of the Revolutionary Committee. Phoumi himself will probably be assigned major portfolios, including in all likelihood that of defense.

Meanwhile, reports of increased Pathet Lao military pressure in the Luang Prabang area may indicate an intent to harass or capture the royal capital.

The buildup of both Kong Le's and [Phoumi's forces?] around Vientiane is continuing.

[Here follows material unrelated to Laos.]

John S.D. Eisenhower

485. Editorial Note

The battle for Vientiane between the Phoumi forces and the troops of Kong Le began in earnest on the afternoon of December 13. On the morning of December 15 during a lull in the battle, the Embassy evacuated to Thailand all women and non-essential personnel from the Embassy compound. A 1 p.m. that same day, the Embassy came under heavy artillery shelling. Brown and his colleagues moved to the Ambassador's residence where they set up a makeshift communications system with Washington. By December 16, Kong Le's forces staged an orderly withdrawal from the portions of Vientiane they still held and control of the capital passed to the victorious Phoumi forces. On December 18, Phoumi, Boun Oum, and other members of the Revolutionary Committee entered Vientiane and the U.S. Embassy began to return to normal. This account is based on a letter-diary by Brown sent to Parsons, undated, entitled, "Notes on the battle of Vientiane FYI." (Department of State, FE Files: Lot 62 D 26, Brown; included in the microfiche supplement)

The fighting and damage to the Embassy placed a severe strain on communications between Washington and Vientiane. After the burning of the Embassy, the only method of communication was by Morse code for a few hours a day via a small sending and receiving radio unit in Brown's office. Because transmission of messages to Vientiane was limited to the few hours that the radio unit was on the air, all Department of State messages were routed through SEA for approval. As a standby arrangement, messages were to be sent through British Embassy channels to the British Embassy in Vientiane, but this method was to be used only in the event of a total breakdown of communications with the U.S. Embassy. This standby system was not needed. (Memorandum from Usher to Anderson, December 15; Department of State, FE/SEA (Laos) Files: Lot 65 D 169, 350 Pol Affairs, Dec 11–20, 1960)

486. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 14, 1960—11:02 p.m.

641. Paris for Merchant and Parsons. High level JCS–State conference[2] just concluded in which there was thorough review of the political, military situation in Laos based upon recent communications and intelligence estimates. Particular attention centered on Vientiane. There follows a résumé of most important considerations on which your and Merchant, Parsons early comment is solicited:

1. With formation of new anti-Communist provisional government we now have much greater freedom of action than previously existed under which certain limitations and restrictions were imposed upon us. This fact facilitates our action in cooperation with the RLG in meeting the urgent problems which now face us.

2. For purposes of clarity and appropriate use in certain forums, especially for press purposes, it would be very helpful if the RLG could make a public pronouncement referring to the threat to her integrity which exists and of the request for assistance which she has consequently made of the United States.

3. Note was made of the need for additional artillery. Information indicates that supplies in Thailand are adequate to meet requirements and the JCS is taking action through CINCPAC to facilitate delivery as expeditiously as possible.

4. In discussing the use of special Thai forces it appears that the situation now in Vientiane does not require their utilization in this situation. However, their employment should be kept in mind if subsequently required, especially should such key points as Luang Prabang require emergency assistance.

5. In view of the changed political situation no restrictions should be imposed on the utilization of CAT civil aircraft for the ferrying of supplies or troops of any type to any point required.

6. As under para 5, there would likewise seem to be no prohibition to the use of US aircraft being utilized in direct support of our military and economic aid operations to Laos.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1460. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Steeves, cleared by SEA, and approved by Hare. According to Hare, it was cleared by Goodpaster. Repeated niact to Paris and Bangkok and to London, Saigon, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD. Merchant and Parsons accompanied Secretary Herter to Paris where he attended the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting.

[2] An account of this meeting, which took place at 4 p.m., is in a memorandum for the record by Colonel E.F. Black, Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. (Washington National Records Center, RG 330, OSD/ISA Files: FRC 64 A 2170; included in the microfiche supplement)

7. From here it would seem that one of the most urgent requirements for Vientiane may be medical assistance. Preliminary checks reveal that there are field hospitals in readiness for airlift from Thailand which could be supplied in response to immediate request. If required this request should be initiated.

8. In addition to possible medical requirements similar action may be required for emergency lift of supplies and personnel and [*for*?] disaster relief. If early estimates of magnitude can be supplied this would assist for planning purposes.

9. The whole question of reconnaissance for intelligence purposes came up for intensive review. In view of the fact that the next most immediate danger may be a buildup of dissident elements within the country or preparations for assistance from across the border, aerial reconnaissance is deemed imperative. Whether this operation carried out by US or Thai aircraft, it would appear impossible to restrict operations to the Thai side of the border.

10. In view of somewhat restricted mission PEO who in past confined activities to training mission responsibilities should include military advice to FAL. Presume present staff adequate for this purpose.

11. Consideration given to appropriate steps which may be taken in the United Nations citing Russian interference. A separate message covers this action.[3]

12. Strong response to Russian note of protest being prepared and should be ready for release tomorrow.[4]

Following JCS meeting, General Goodpaster was given account, which he communicated to President, saying purpose mainly to acquaint him with questions which might be upcoming but that his specific views regarding use of Thai and American aircraft would be helpful.[5]

President replied that he felt broad governing principle should be to be as firm as we can within framework of legality. He saw no problem re use of either Thai or American planes for delivery of military or non-military matériel. He would be inclined approve Thai reconnaissance over Lao territory if question raised. Re use of Thai forces, concept of their use to relieve Vientiane was attractive but he understood immediate decision not required. Finally, he suggested that if Phoumi forces successful and some fillip to maintain morale of

[3] See Document 488.

[4] The translated text of the Soviet note of December 13, charging U.S. and SEATO intervention in Laos' domestic affairs, and the text of the U.S. note of December 17, rejecting that charge and blaming the Soviet Union and its allies for "the present fratricidal war," are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, January 2, 1961, pp. 15–17.

[5] See *infra*.

troops would be helpful, he would be glad use emergency fund for purpose.[6]

Henderson

[6] That "fillip" took the form a bonus of one month's pay for each of the soldiers of the 10 battalions engaged in taking Vientiane. The cost, $232,000, was paid by the Embassy in Vientiane out of counterpart funds in early January 1961. (Memorandum from Stoessel to Goodpaster, January 13; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, International Files, Laos)

487. Memorandum for the Record of a Telephone Conversation Between the President and the President's Staff Assistant (Goodpaster), Washington, December 14, 1960[1]

I phoned the President at Walter Reed Hospital[2] at about 7 PM on December 14th concerning the development of the situation in Laos. Secretary Douglas, Admiral Burke, and Deputy Under Secretary Hare had discussed the situation with Colonel Eisenhower and me for about an hour prior to this time, and were present during my talk with the President.[3]

I told him that the discussion had brought out that, while the situation in Laos was not clear, there seemed to be several major favorable trends and developments. The capital city, Vientiane, had been taken in large part by the pro-Western forces of Phoumi. Also, a pro-Western government under Boun Oum had come into power by apparently legal processes. Two points were giving concern—the airport at Vientiane which is of key importance for the Soviet support of pro-Communist elements has not been taken by Phoumi, although he asserts it is "neutralized," and there are reports of pro-Communist movements on Luang Prabang.

The development of the situation has given rise to several questions regarding U.S. policy and action. First, what would our policy be concerning the use of Thai aircraft for transport of military and non-military supplies into the area, and perhaps the movement in of a

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret. Drafted by Goodpaster on December 16.

[2] President Eisenhower was at Walter Reed Hospital all day on December 14 for a physical examination.

[3] See *supra*. Burke's account of the meeting with Goodpaster and Colonel Eisenhower and the telephone call to the President is in Naval History Center, Burke Papers, Originator File, Laos.

military hospital. Second, what would be the position regarding U.S. delivery in U.S. aircraft of limited military and non-military supplies, disaster relief supplies, and the Thai military hospital, should such transportation prove necessary, i.e., should the Thais be unable to handle the job. A third question is whether we would favor the use of Thai land and air forces to take or to hold the airfields, one at Vientiane now under pro-Communist control, and the other at Luang Prabang under control of Phoumi's forces; the idea would be for our representatives in the field to have authority to agree with the Thais upon this action, should it be deemed necessary on the spot. Finally, what would be our position regarding reconnaissance of Laos by Thai aircraft, and of North Vietnam by U.S. aircraft?

I mentioned two related points. The first is that the proposal to use Thai or U.S. transport aircraft for support is dependent upon gaining control of the airfield at Vientiane, even if briefly. Phoumi has made a request for some 20 105-mm Howitzers with ammunition. The second point is that Sarit has stated that, if Thai combatant forces are used, he would want a firm commitment from the U.S. to come to his support should he be "jumped" by the Chinese or the Russians.

The President said that, in the situation described, he wanted to be as firm as we can be. He thought we should act vigorously, now that we have the cover of legality, in that we are responding to the request of a legally constituted government. He noted that we are committed through the SEATO pact to maintaining the security of the area of Laos, even though Laos is not itself a member. He said he was completely in favor of the use of Thai transport aircraft, and U.S. transport aircraft as well. He asked if we had such aircraft available in the area, and I told him I understood from Mr. Douglas that we do have one or more C–130s there. I told the President I thought the other questions could and should await further developments, and the group present agreed. The President suggested that an immediate check of feasibility be made as to the possibility of using high-altitude reconnaissance equipment to reconnoiter North Vietnam. Mr. Douglas undertook to do this.[3]

The President further suggested that an immediate check be made of the possibility of giving a bonus to the troops of Phoumi to reward their success and inspire further effort. He said he would be agreeable to using emergency funds for this purpose. Mr. Douglas undertook to look into this at once.

[3] An undated plan of operations for photographic and electronic reconnaissance of Laos, North Vietnam, and South China by U–2 aircraft was submitted to Goodpaster, who wrote the following note on the plan: "No action unless new recommendation submitted. G" (Eisenhower Library, Project Clean Up, Intelligence Matters)

I communicated the foregoing to Mr. Douglas, Mr. Hare and Admiral Burke.

G.
Brigadier General, USA

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488. Telegram From the Department of State to the Delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting[1]

Washington, December 14, 1960—9:01 p.m.

Tosec 7. For Secretary Merchant and Parsons.

1. Dept has considered carefully desirability USG taking immediate initiative calling for Security Council meeting consider Soviet intervention in Laos, including providing arms and ammunition to rebel forces, as threat international peace and security. Dept believes that disadvantages outweigh advantages of such US move at this time. Without going into details of Amb Brown's excellent telegram (Vientiane 1143 rptd Paris 537),[2] we believe we could not expect propaganda victory in Council (particularly with UK and France not likely support US position; Parsons may be able obtain further info re their probable attitude), and that outcome in SC likely to be "plague on both houses". This does not preclude our moving into SC should situation change or should it become clear that Soviets or some other party intend request SC meeting on Laos. While our taking initiative would give us some psychological advantage in having been first call meeting, such action does not afford any practical advantage in terms of the actual consideration or outcome of Laotian case by Council. In any event, should item be submitted we could submit appropriate counter-item against USSR.

2. However, there is an interim step we can take now, on which we would like your judgment. We could suggest to Sisouk (Lao representative to UN) circulate note all UN members calling their attention to events in Laos, Soviet intervention, and citing fact that Soviet aircraft flown by Soviet pilots have brought in arms and ammunition,

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1460. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Robert L. Funseth and Joseph J. Sisco, cleared by FE and SEA, and approved by Charles E. Bohlen. Repeated niact to Vientiane and to Bangkok, London, Phnom Penh, and Saigon.

[2] In this telegram, December 13, Brown sent a long analysis of and answers to the possible charges that might be brought against the United States for intervention in Laos. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–1360; included in the microfiche supplement)

including artillery pieces, for use by insurgent forces engaged in armed conflict with army of Royal Govt of Laos for control capital city Vientiane.[3]

3. *For Vientiane.* Would appreciate your views foregoing, repeating your response Paris for info Secretary.

Henderson

[3] Secto 5 from Paris, December 15, contained the Secretary's agreement with the idea of a Lao note to U.N. members. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1560)

489. Telegram From the Delegation at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting to the Department of State[1]

Paris, December 15, 1960—9 p.m.

Secto 6. Department relay Vientiane niact unnumbered. Reference: Tosec 8.[2] Agree MAP supplies in Thailand should be drawn on meet Laos requirements but that Thai Special Forces (paragraph 4) should not be employed unless emergency assistance required in special situations in which their capability could be critical. In such event maximum security consistent with effectiveness should of course be observed. FYI. At official level discussion with UK and French in Paris morning 15th Merchant said we had no indication Thai intervention actual or impending and implied no present need for it. British and French obviously jumpy about this possibility. End FYI.

Re paragraph 5 use of CAT as required already approved December 12. However believe US military aircraft (other than MAAG, PEO, Attaché planes) should not be utilized for missions within Laos without specific Presidential approval in view desirability avoiding action which would heighten risks of broadening conflict internationally and frighten neutral and allied opinion outside SEA.

Fully agree maximum action medical and disaster relief which should be publicized and employ US military aircraft if required to [*from*] Udorn.

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1560. Top Secret; Niact. Also sent to CINCPAC for POLAD and repeated niact to Bangkok, to London, Phnom Penh, and Saigon. Instead of being repeated to Vientiane, the text of this telegram was summarized and sent as telegram 644, December 16. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–1560)

[2] Printed as telegram 641 to Vientiane, Document 486.

Re paragraph 9 while aerial reconnaissance may be only marginally useful in Laos except for populated areas, recognize it may be required. Believe aircraft should to extent possible not be identifiable as US or Thai military planes.

Agree PEO military advice to FAL is important and should be given but US personnel should not be with troops at battalion or lower level in field (except in Headquarters areas such as Vientiane where they should avoid involvement in actual direction of combat operations).

Herter

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490. Notes on the Acting Secretary of State's Staff Meeting, Washington, December 16, 1960[1]

[Here follows item 1.]

2. Laos

Commenting on Mr. Cumming's intelligence briefing[2] on the situation in Laos, in which it was pointed out that the pro-Communist forces had mounted a counter attack on Vientiane with mortar and artillery fire indicating a high professionalism on the part of the gunners, Mr. Henderson expressed some doubt as to the ability of the anti-Communist forces to maintain themselves in control of the situation over the long term. He noted the easy access which North Vietnamese troops could have if the bloc were to decide on intervention on a larger scale. Mr. Cumming remarked that there is at present no firm evidence of North Vietnamese troop deployment on the frontiers, but it was the consensus of the meeting that there remained a real possibility of a greater involvement of the bloc in Laos than has been the case so far.

Mr. Steeves read a message from Prime Minister Boun Oum of the Laotian government requesting emergency economic military assistance from the United States.[3] Mr. Steeves commented that this mes-

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[1] Source: Department of State, Secretary's Staff Meetings: Lot 63 D 75. Secret. Drafted by Emory C. Swank, Deputy Director of the Executive Secretariat.

[2] Attached was a list of items from which Cumming gave the intelligence briefing. Item 3 on this list was entitled, "Hanoi warns that Thai interference in Laos might force North Vietnam to intervene."

[3] The text of this December 16 letter is contained in an unnumbered telegram from Vientiane, also December 16. The Department of State responded positively to this request in a letter to Boun Oum enclosed in telegram 658 to Vientiane, December 22.

Continued

sage appeared to afford a legal basis for our support of the Boun Oum forces. In this connection, Mr. Steeves noted the urgent need for the dispatch of a medical unit from Thailand to Vientiane. He said that he favored airlift of this medical unit to Vientiane but noted that it would be necessary for certain American supervisory or technical personnel to accompany it. Mr. Hare observed that the President had approved support of friendly forces in Laos if such support could be given within a framework of legality. It would appear desirable, however, to obtain White House approval of any action involving the entry of American personnel into Laos.

Mr. Hare remarked that he had with him at the meeting the draft reply to the recent Soviet note on Laos. He said he hoped to clear it with Mr. Dillon later in the day, at which time the manner of delivery and the possible release to the press of the note would come up for discussion. [4]

[Here follow the remaining items.]

Emory C. Swank

(Both Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–1660; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] See footnote 4, Document 486.

491. Paper Prepared by the Assistant White House Staff Secretary (Eisenhower) [1]

Washington, December 17, 1960.

SYNOPSIS OF INTELLIGENCE MATERIAL REPORTED TO THE PRESIDENT BY GENERAL GOODPASTER

Special Watch Committee Conclusions

On the basis of findings of a Special Watch Committee Meeting on 16 December 1960 concerning developments relating to Laos, the United States Intelligence Board concludes that:

The recent developments in Laos have undoubtedly forced the Communists to review their tactics and immediate objectives.

Such evidence as we have to date regarding Communist intentions is susceptible of two interpretations:

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Top Secret.

a. A decision to rely on the Kong Le/Pathet Lao forces, with such increased assistance as is required in matériel and selected personnel,[2] to prevent the Phoumi–Boun Oum forces from establishing effective control of Laos;

b. A decision to intervene openly with Democratic Republic of Vietnam or Chinese Communist forces.

The course of action "a" would not only advance Communist interests in Laos but would also allow full opportunity for attempting to isolate and discredit the US. Although the evidence better supports the adoption of course "a", open intervention under course "b" is not precluded even though such a course might involve substantial risks to the bloc.

John S.D. Eisenhower

[2] In a memorandum to Goodpaster, December 17, Allen Dulles submitted an intelligence working paper which concurred with the conclusions of the Watch Committee report. The CIA memorandum concluded that the Phoumi–Boun Oum forces would require massive outside financial and military support to survive. The Dulles memorandum was reported to the President and circulated to the NSC. (*Ibid.*, Miscellaneous Material, CIA vol. III; included in the microfiche supplement)

492. Memorandum of Discussion at the 470th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, December 20, 1960[1]

[Here follow a paragraph listing the participants at the meeting and items 1 and 2.]

3. *The Situation in Laos* (NSC 6012;[2] NSC Action No. 2324;[3] Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated December 19, 1960[4])

Mr. Dulles predicted a strong Communist reaction to recent events in Laos. He said the initial Communist reaction to the defeat of the pro-Communist forces in that country was a combination of political and military pressure. The Communists are castigating the West,

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records. Top Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Boggs on December 21.

[2] Document 65.

[3] NSC Action No. 2324, approved by the President on October 26, noted that the NSC had discussed recent developments relating to the situation in Laos on October 20. See Document 434.

[4] This memorandum transmitted Dulles' December 17 memorandum to Goodpaster; see footnote 2, *supra*.

especially the United States, and are requesting the reconvening of the International Control Commission. Militarily, the initial Communist reaction consists of a covert strengthening of the Kong Le forces north of Vientiane and a build-up of the Pathet Lao forces elsewhere. Soviet planes are conducting air drops north of Vientiane probably for the purpose of reprovisioning the Kong Le forces. Mr. Dulles felt that a more massive Communist intervention in Laos could not be excluded. The Kong Le forces, which are retreating in good order, may regroup for an attack on Vientiane, or may continue north to Luang Prabang. Phoumi is trying to make arrangements to get the King out of Luang Prabang by air. However, the Kong Le forces may move to the Sam Neua area to join up with other Pathet Lao forces. Mr. Dulles felt it was unlikely the Soviets would assume the risk of supplying the Pathet Lao by air, using Soviet planes, unless they intended to follow up this action with other vigorous measures. A number of Soviet IL–14's are arriving in Hanoi. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] Chinese Communists are airlifting supplies to Nanning, while North Vietnam is flying supplies to Dien Bien Phu. Mr. Dulles believed the Communists would do whatever was necessary to get rid of the anti-Communist regime in Laos. He added that the Phoumi forces fought well in the recent action, but that Phoumi was overoptimistic as a result of his victory, and was ill-informed as to enemy strength and dispositions. We are endeavoring to assist Phoumi to increase reconnaissance. Mr. Dulles believed that the present anti-Communist government in Laos would require extensive outside assistance in order to survive, and that even with such assistance large parts of the country would remain outside government control. If the Phoumi forces make their position at Vientiane secure, a Communist government with a national front flag may be set up at Sam Neua under Souvanna Phouma, who is now in Cambodia. However, Souvanna may attempt a government in exile in Cambodia. Mr. Dulles, in conclusion, said the Government of Laos would be subject to a continuing and dangerous threat over the coming weeks.

Secretary Herter said he had had several talks in Paris with the French and British Foreign Ministers, who were very much concerned about the situation in Laos.[5] The French dislike Phoumi intensively, despite his recent successes. The United Kingdom does not oppose Phoumi so violently, but feels the only solution for Laos is a government composed of all the parties in the country. Secretary Herter said that when he left Paris the French remained non-committal and had not yet recognized the new Government of Laos. SEATO obviously

[5] Accounts of these discussions are in a memorandum of conversation, December 15, and Secto 26, December 18. (Department of State, Central Files, 396.1–PA/12–1560 and 751J.00/12–1860, respectively; both included in the microfiche supplement)

has a correct interest in the situation of Laos. In SEATO we are under the obligation to consult with respect to internal subversion and have a specific responsibility to render assistance to Laos in the event of external aggression. Thailand is now endeavoring to have the problem of Laos considered in SEATO, but we are taking the position that SEATO ought not to take any initiative in the absence of external aggression. Secretary Herter then noted that there was some evidence of Thai involvement on Phoumi's side in the fighting at Vientiane. He said he wished to point this out because the Communists would make accusations that the Thais were aggressors in Laos. This could develop into quite a serious problem. The President said perhaps we should have some of our aircraft carriers in the vicinity. Secretary Gates said U.S. aircraft carriers were already in the area. He then asked whether we were making any effort to capture Soviet equipment supplied to the Kong Le forces. Mr. Dulles replied that we were making such efforts but he did not know of any Soviet equipment captured so far. General Lemnitzer believed one Soviet mortar had been captured.

Secretary Gates believed the situation in Laos was likely to remain critical for months. Secretary Herter thought there was need to accumulate all the evidence we could get of Soviet activity in Laos, in view of the fact that the case might be taken to the United Nations. Mr. Dulles said the Soviets would probably be clever enough to provide the pro-Communist forces in Laos with U.S. equipment, which the Chinese Communists had captured in the Korean war. General Lemnitzer said the 105's which supported Kong Le at Vientiane might be U.S. 105's. Mr. Parsons said that Thailand claimed to have in its possession a Soviet helicopter with U.S. markings. Mr. Gray asked whether this situation did not require additional U.S. military assistance to Laos. Secretary Gates replied in the affirmative, but said no further authorization was needed.

The National Security Council:[6]

Noted and discussed the subject in the light of (a) an oral report by the Director of Central Intelligence based upon the enclosure to the reference memorandum of December 19, 1960; and (b) comments by the Secretary of State on certain policy implications involved.

[Here follow items 4 and 5.]

Marion W. Boggs

[6] The following paragraph constitutes NSC Action No. 2357, approved by the President on January 3, 1961. (Department of State, S/S–NSC (Miscellaneous) Files: Lot 66 D 95, Records of Action by the National Security Council)

493. Telegram From the Commander in Chief, Pacific (Felt) to the Joint Chiefs of Staff[1]

Honolulu, December 23, 1960—3:39 p.m.

232339Z. 1. Since August 9, I have consistently and repeatedly maintained that the use of force was the only way to dislodge Kong Le from Vientiane and change the political status. I also recommended the use of US and/or Thai assets because I considered this essential to stiffen Phoumi's military stance and capabilities despite certain political risks.

2. Now that both above objectives have been accomplished, I believe at this particular stage we should be careful in employment of recognizable U.S. or Thai personnel or military assets known not to be held by RLG while we effectively advertise a clear case of Sov bloc intervention to enlist international sympathy for RLG. Concurrently we should provide the most vigorous support to Phoumi for accomplishment of necessary missions by the Lao themselves to avoid obvious excuse for stepped up Sov bloc intervention.

3. Continued air resupply of Kong Le and Co by Sov bloc might be disastrous to RLG in attempts to reestablish and maintain its control.

4. Therefore, RLG should develop minimum military air capability to take advantage of its right as the legal government to control air space over Laos. To accomplish this, I recommend following courses of action be set in motion immediately:

A. Get agreement from Phoumi and Sarit to send to Thailand on a staggered time schedule Lao pilots for quick checkout in operations of armed T–6s.

B. Supply immediately ten armed T–6s to Phoumi from Thai stocks and replace under MAP.

C. Contract with Air America for maintenance,

D. At soonest time after at least five pilots are ready have RLG announce that no further intervention by foreign aircraft will be tolerated and that Lao pilots have been ordered to shoot down intruders.

E. Try to bag a few birds. Even an unsuccessful attempt will be enough to scare off any transport planes.

F. T–6s could also be used for recce missions and attack against PL artillery and rolling stock.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2360. Top Secret; Niact. Repeated to the Department of State. The source text is the Department of State copy.

5. Since time is of the essence in stopping Sov bloc resupply effort, I suggest that delivery of up to four or five aircraft should be expedited under above plan to commence operation ASAP.[2]

[2] In an unnumbered telegram from CINCPAC to Chief PEO, Laos, December 25, CINCPAC informed the Chief of PEO that the proposed courses of action were under consideration. The JCS, with the concurrence of the Departments of State and Defense, authorized PEO Laos and JUSMAG Thailand to initiate action with Phoumi and Sarit to expedite training of Lao pilots in Thailand. (*Ibid.*, EA Files: Lot 68 D 77, Laos 1960, Part II; included in the microfiche supplement)

494. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 26, 1960—5:45 p.m.

681. To Ambassador from Parsons. Believe it would be useful and opportune for you in your discretion to deliver orally ASAP personal message from me to King along following lines:

"At outset of New Year wish to present my respectful best wishes to HM for his own health and happiness and for re-establishment of peace in his Kingdom. May I also take this occasion to reaffirm to HM my abiding deep interest in his country's destiny. I have shared HM's concern over events of past few months which have appeared so seriously to threaten independence of Kingdom. New Year brings new hope but also new dangers.

"Thus it is as old friend of HM's country that I presume to make certain observations on international position of Laos. I realize how absorbing and difficult internal situation has been, but seen from Washington it appears to us of vital importance that international aspects not be overlooked.

"While I am sure legality of Prince Boun Oum's government is generally accepted in Laos, as it is by US, internationally this matter is subject to question even among some of Laos' other true friends. In this doubt USSR finds itself free to bring aid to rebels and this action is not condemned. In fact if a complaint were made against USSR in UN today, it doubtful whether such complaint would be widely supported.

"It therefore appears to us that establishing on international plane legality of present RLG is matter of paramount and urgent importance. From international point of view legitimacy of RLG would be clarified by resignation of former PM and in any case by investiture of National Assembly. We are dubious re advisability going outside normal proce-

[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2660. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Chapman, cleared with SEA and IO/UNP in substance, and approved by Parsons. Repeated priority to Bangkok.

dures because customarily revolutionary governments must prove they represent or at least control country before their legality is recognized by community of nations. In time that would elapse under such a course rebels within Laos would be enabled to receive outside support and grow in strength.

"Another matter of concern to many friends of Laos and perhaps of alarm to Kingdom's enemies is policy of new Royal Government. Declaration of neutrality which traditional policy of country would be most helpful in rallying international support for Laos. Such declaration would be couched in such a way as to hamper in no way support we bring to Kingdom.

"Finally in order strengthen RLG's position, build case against Soviet intervention and bring their aid to rebels to halt, HM's Government might be well served by delivering and making public note of protest to USSR and also instructing HM's representative to UN to circulate among UN members a complaint against Soviet intervention.

"These actions would serve to clarify present situation, materially strengthen RLG, publicly label rebels as such, and should make it difficult for USSR to continue its intervention.

"In closing may I express heartfelt wish that New Year will bring back peace to people of Laos."

Please feel free to alter presentation above points to have greatest impact on King.

Merchant

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495. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 27, 1960—9:21 p.m.

688. CINCPAC's 232339Z being passed sep to CHPEO and CHJUSMAG.[2] Joint State–Defense message.

1. Joint State–Defense concept here[3] is that we should proceed take all action immediately necessary to implement reference CINCPAC courses of action.

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2360. Top Secret; Niact. Drafted by Admiral Heinz of the Department of Defense; cleared with SEA, U/MSC, and JCS; and approved by Parsons. Also sent priority to Bangkok and repeated priority to CINCPAC and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] Document 493.

[3] According to a memorandum for the record by Weiss, December 28, Usher informed Weiss that the question of providing Laos with 10 T–6 aircraft had been discussed at a "high-level" meeting on December 27 attended by Parsons and Merchant for the Department of State with similar level of representation from the Department of

Continued

2. To provide essential political basis for this action RLG must make clear to world opinion its strong objection to Soviet violation Lao air space. Specifically RLG should take following steps:

a) Formally protest to USSR against illegal Soviet airlift to rebels.
b) Instruct Lao UN delegation circulate memorandum to other UN delegations setting forth facts of Soviet violations.
c) Issue statement that if violations continue RLG will be forced to take steps to defend its air space.

3. Whole plan should be discussed with Phoumi to be sure he understands and accepts it including prerequisite political actions. He should be told we would consider favorably a request from him for 10 armed T–6s upon fulfillment of preliminary political ground work which would establish circumstances under which he could use these aircraft.

4. Re para 4a reftel, with State concurrence JCS has already directed CINCPAC to implement this training.[4]

5. Pending receipt your comments and information concerning Phoumi's reaction, following actions should now be started:

a) Re para 4b reftel, take necessary preliminary steps including negotiations with Sarit for later transfer of 10 armed T–6's.
b) Re para 4c, [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] to undertake negotiations with Air America to amend contract to provide for maintenance. Desire Chief PEO assist with local Air America rep as possible.

6. Actual turnover of aircraft to RLG subject to later direction by Washington upon proper development of political basis for this action.

7. Request your comments.[5]

Vientiane: Pass to Chief PEO.

Bangkok: Pass Chief JUSMAG for information.

Merchant

Defense and CIA. According to Usher, the consensus of the meeting was that the CINCPAC proposal should be acted upon. Weiss also gave U/MSC approval to the plan. (Department of State, G/PM Files: Lot 64 D 341, Top Secret; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] See footnote 2, Document 493.

[5] In telegram 1132 from Bangkok, December 29, the Embassy informed the Department that Thailand agreed in principle to the training of Lao pilots. The Embassy expected no difficulties in transfer of the T–6s from Thai stocks to Laos. In general, the Embassy supported the program "wholeheartedly." (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2960; included in the microfiche supplement)

In telegram 1191, from Vientiane, December 28, the Embassy concurred with the preparatory steps for training Lao pilots and transfer of the aircraft to the FAL and with the political steps outlined. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2860; included in the microfiche supplement)

496. Editorial Note

At the 472d meeting of the National Security Council, December 29, Allen Dulles gave his usual briefing on "Significant World Developments Affecting U.S. Security." The briefing and discussion turned to Laos:

"Mr. Dulles believed the situation in Laos had not changed much since last week. The three Bloc partners—Moscow, Peiping, and Hanoi—were still supporting Kong Le and the anti-government forces. The extent of the Communist build-up was, however, difficult to determine. He believed that considerable supplies had reached Sam Neua and Dienbienphu. The Soviets had expanded the total Communist airlift capacity in the area by bringing in AN–12's. Khrushchev on December 26 had indicated to the U.K. Ambassador that Moscow regards current activity in Laos as a long-term operation which might last for seven years without a major war resulting. From this conversation Mr. Dulles drew the conclusion that the Bloc did not intend to intervene openly in Laos with identifiable military forces. Three columns of Phoumi forces are moving north from Vientiane. The bulk of the Kong Le forces are at Xieng Khouang where the U.S. military attaché plane was fired on. Mr. Dulles reported incidentally that there was no firm evidence as to where the fire directed at this plane came from. Finally, Mr. Dulles said that Phoumi was dragging his feet on legalization of the Boun Oum government and that Souvanna Phouma was still in Cambodia conferring with Sihanouk.

"The President asked what the State Department thought of Senator Mansfield's recent statement on Laos. Mr. Merchant said the Department was shocked. Senator Mansfield was generally helpful and well-informed on foreign policy but three times recently he had made rather damaging statements. His statement yesterday was a complete non sequitur since the last sentence tended to contradict the earlier part of the statement. The President said that Senators Mansfield and Fulbright together seemed to be endeavoring to exert steady pressure on the State Department.

"Mr. Merchant reported that the U.S. [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] had furnished the Secretary General of the UN with information on UAR activities in the Congo. This information had apparently undermined the Secretary General's confidence in the good faith of the Egyptians. With respect to Laos, Mr. Merchant noted that the U.S. was trying to persuade the provisional government to get itself legitimized. At least the King was on our side. Moreover, we had persuaded the U.K. to try to persuade Souvanna Phouma to resign and destroy the Communist pretext that he is still the legitimate prime minister." (Memorandum of discussion by Boggs, December 29; Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, NSC Records)

According to *The New York Times*, December 29, Senator Mansfield said in a statement in Washington on that date that there was little to show for the approximately $300 million in cumulative foreign

aid expenditures for Laos except "chaos, discontent and armies on the loose." Mansfield warned of a "blood bath" and feared Laos would be submerged by North Vietnam and China.

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497. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos[1]

Washington, December 29, 1960—9:44 p.m.

698. Vientiane's 1197, 1199 and especially 1200[2] present US Government with the most serious problem yet encountered in this long series of events Laos. In our effort to provide sympathetic international atmosphere for new provisional government of Laos and in our attempt to rally necessary free world support, present government's delay in legitimizing status already highly embarrassing and if not consummated in the very near future can spell failure in this very crucial diplomatic effort.

RLG's unwise act in illegally removing kip, talk of dividing the Kingdom and of throwing out the French could completely cripple our best efforts in bringing support, relief, military and political assistance to the present government which they must have if they are to survive.

Grave questions concerning legitimacy, responsibility and intentions of the new government already widely evident even in friendly capitals, being exploited to the hilt by our enemies and now beginning to emerge US domestic circles. Unless rapid forthright effort is made by the King and Boun Oum/Phoumi government to rectify this situation our current efforts to rescue Laos may be heading for disaster.

You are therefore instructed once again to bring these facts of life clearly to Phoumi and Boun Oum as well as any other cabinet members considered in possession of any influence and if feasible reiterate them to the King. Without threatening the withdrawal of all US support at this juncture you should seek immediate assurance that the following actions will be taken:

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[1] Source: Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–2960. Secret; Niact. Drafted by Steeves and Chapman, cleared by SEA and in draft by Merchant, and approved by Parsons. Also sent niact to Bangkok and to Paris and repeated to Saigon, London, Phnom Penh, and CINCPAC for POLAD.

[2] In these telegrams, all December 29, the Embassy reported on political developments within Laos that were disturbing to U.S. policymakers. (*Ibid.*, 751J.00/12–2960, 651.51J/12–2960, and 751J.00/12–2960, respectively; all included in the microfiche supplement)

1. Restoration of kip to a suitable safe treasury in the capital in order allow US to continue to provide the necessary legal dollar backing.

2. Take whatever steps necessary to place unquestioned cloak of legality over present government so that all ambiguity erased with respect to government of Laos which will facilitate Herculean efforts US is making to gain international support.

3. To cease agitation or action directed toward removal of the French Military Mission until some future period when RLG-French relations can be discussed in much quieter time. To open feud with French at this moment would only ensure their opposition to the present regime and make our task of restoring order infinitely greater.

4. To give us unqualified assurance that government is working for a unified Laos with no thought of division into separate entities. If this idea gains credence much of what we are allegedly fighting for is nullified. If Vientiane is to be maintained as the administrative capital, government should establish itself there as rapidly as possible to lay to rest any idea that present regime is maintaining a reserve ace in the hole in Savannakhet.

5. Opportunity should be taken again to urge upon the RLG the absolute necessity of complying with our request previously submitted re protest to the USSR circularization to the UN members on external interference by communist forces in order that US is not charged with running unilateral show in Laos not endorsed even by the RLG.

6. To refrain from unwarranted and uncoordinated changes in military logistical structure which because of their budgetary implications would place US Government in untenable position in regard to future requests to Congress for aid funds. (Ourot Souvanavong former Ambassador here has vivid knowledge of problems faced by Department in past years in defending Laos aid program.)

7. To avoid gratuitous attacks on Geneva accords and statements of RLG attitude on them which will merely isolate RLG yet further.

While we feel most strongly on these and other collateral points we must leave tactics and manner of approach to palace and the government entirely in your hands. You should not however without further assessment threaten US withdrawal of support. It would be our suggestion that Lao, particularly leaders other than Phoumi himself, generally respond better to soft sell. Perhaps it might therefore be worth attempting you and CT arranging to meet with principal Ministers on informal basis and reviewing in suitably relaxed atmosphere present situation and foregoing points.

It appears to us you should stress US friendship for Laos and our consequent concern over present developments on basis their own self interest. They should realize that our information from capitals all over world indicates that RLG is extremely vulnerable and is in fact really only being fully supported by US, Thailand, Philippines, Viet-Nam and GRC. If Laos case were to come up before UN right now, Laos would find little sympathy. Thus it appears to us that their survival not only as a government but even as a nation depends on strengthening

their position internally and internationally. All our advice has been to that end and in our eyes in interest of Laos and of themselves. On internal front you might indicate that one measure which might greatly strengthen RLG's position would be an offer of amnesty not only to Kong Le troops but also to PL. PL who surrendered should be well treated. This measure might well serve to sap PL capabilities which as things going at present cause us grave forebodings.

If no results are obtained, then we are considering recalling you for consultation and informing Lao of reasons for this action.

For Bangkok. Believe Sarit should be told of these serious developments in Laos and of the essence of this presentation, asking him to use any channel open to him to assist us in convincing Phoumi of the wisdom of these actions.

For Paris. While general exchange of views will continue here in Washington including the French believe it may be profitable to impress upon the French that hesitancy their part wholeheartedly to support the King's provisional government in Laos is in our opinion beginning to produce dangerous further deterioration French-Lao relations. Not only should they make haste to set to rest any continuing fears which Boun Oum–Phoumi government have of French intentions but they should go out of their way to restore Lao confidence.

Merchant

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498. Memorandum of a Conference With the President, White House, Washington, December 31, 1960, 11:30 a.m.[1]

OTHERS PRESENT

General Lemnitzer
Secretary Merchant
Secretary Douglas
Assistant Secretary Parsons
Mr. Allen Dulles
General Cabell
Mr. Steeves (State Dept.)
Mr. Gordon Gray
General Persons
Mr. Hagerty

[1] Source: Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, Eisenhower Diaries. Privileged. Drafted by John Eisenhower. According to another account of this meeting, the discussion lasted until 12:45 p.m. (Informal notes by Merchant, December 31; Department of State, Central Files, 611.51J/12–3160)

General Goodpaster
Colonel Eisenhower

The President opened by informing the group that he had been thoroughly briefed on the Laotian situation earlier in the morning[2] and asked if there were any new developments. General Cabell said he had just left a meeting of the Watch Committee, in which the conclusion had been reached that fairly sizeable forces were in operation in the northwest of Laos. About 1500–2500 troops were moving from the direction of North Viet-Nam into Laos. Although the origin of these troops is unknown, it is estimated that this force comprises about 5 Pathet Lao equipped battalions, with mortars. General Cabell and General Lemnitzer then showed the President a chart which indicated the areas of Pathet Lao resistance and the directions of the attack. This chart showed a large area of Pathet Lao-controlled territory north of Vientiane and an arrow from that area toward the east. It also indicated that Sam Neua Province is in the hands of the Pathet Lao, and another arrow drawn from that direction toward the west converges with the first at the town of Xieng Khouang. If these two forces join, they will cut Laos in half, isolating the north from the south. In addition to these two areas, a third direction of attack had its origin in Phong Saly Province southward into north central Laos. This last force appears to be exclusively Pathet Lao, although it can be well supplied from Dien Bien Phu in North Viet-Nam. It must be estimated that the entire Province of Phong Saly is in the hands of the Pathet Lao. Kong Le himself is north of Vientiane and Phoumi is commanding a force which is defending against the attack from Phong Saly. Identification of force is difficult, since North Laos is mainly mountainous jungle where tree cover is very extensive.

The President observed the possibility of creating great difficulties to operations by cutting the roads. He said that while we need more information before we can take overt action, we cannot afford to stand by and allow Laos to fall to the Communists. The time may soon come when we should employ the Seventh Fleet, with its force of marines.

General Lemnitzer then summarized the U.S. position as one of readiness Condition Two, meaning alert in place. The 503rd Airborne Battle Group is alerted on Okinawa, and 1400 marines are present with the Seventh Fleet Task Force. This Task Force includes the aircraft carrier *Lexington,* currently located in the Gulf of Tonkin, and the *Bennington,* a helicopter carrier in Subic Bay. Admiral Felt has asked for an augmentation of C–130s to increase his airlift capabilities. This has been granted and the aircraft will probably be sent to Bangkok.

[2] No record of this briefing has been found.

General Cabell then told the President that CIA is watching carefully signs of movement of troops from an area south of Sam Neua to further cut the neck of Laos. If such materializes, it will then appear that the Communist objective is to take over the entire country rather than to create merely a Communist-occupied zone.

Mr. Merchant then informed the President that a message recently received indicated that Americans are evacuating Vientiane.[3] Today's courier flight from Bangkok to Vientiane has been cancelled. This seemed to him to be inconsistent with the actual situation, since there is no indication that Vientiane itself is being threatened. He said he intended to recheck this message. The President commented that people can get scared a long way back, and cited humorously the fact that some people were preparing to evacuate Paris during the Ardennes offensive.

Mr. Merchant then told the President that he and General Lemnitzer had agreed on the paramount necessity of identifying open intervention. He visualized our courses of action as threefold: (1) military action, (2) internal political action within Laos, and (3) broad international action. In the military area they agree that while open intervention must be proved before we can do much overtly, still we should not hold up on our military preparations. Mr. Merchant placed great weight on the necessity for effective action regarding the internal political situation in Laos. Boun Oum must be induced to allow his name to be formally confirmed by the Assembly as Prime Minister. Until this happens, the U.S. will be isolated in its support of Boun Oum. We must not threaten him with lack of support if he refused to accede, but we must use every kind of pressure short of that.

At this moment Mr. Merchant visualized no broad international action. He said Mr. Steeves had had a good talk with Hammarskjold at the UN, but at this time Hammarskjold was opposed to bringing the matter up in that body.[4] Furthermore, the reactivation of the International Control Commission has been proposed and supported by the Indians, the USSR, and all members of the Communist Bloc. The British have found appeal in this course of action. We are not inclined to coerce Boun Oum into accepting the reactivation of that body at this moment; but perhaps this move will come later. Another proposal for which he has no brief is that of calling a meeting of those powers which met at Geneva in 1954. Finally, there is the proposal for overt

[3] Telegram 1218 from Vientiane, December 31. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3160; included in the microfiche supplement)

[4] The meeting on December 30 was reported in telegram 1866 from USUN, December 30. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3060; included in the microfiche supplement)

SEATO Council action.[5] This does not seem advisable as of today. Mr. Merchant feels that the Thais, the Filipinos, and the Pakistanis will probably stand by us in the SEATO Council; but the British and French will not support us in backing Boun Oum to the hilt at this moment. For now, Mr. Merchant recommends that we confine our activities to bilateral conferences with our friends.

To the President's question, Mr. Merchant does not think that Boun Oum's fears regarding unfavorable action of the Parliament are genuine. Indeed, Mr. Merchant thinks the Parliament would invest him by unanimous vote. His feeling is that Boun Oum fears losing face. When at Savannakhet, Boun Oum had declared Parliament dissolved. This statement makes him reluctant to place himself even for a short time at their disposal.

The President reiterated his feeling that Boun Oum must be induced to do so. He then mentioned his reply to a letter received from Prime Minister Macmillan this morning.[6] The Prime Minister's letter had dwelt on the necessity for legitimizing the Boun Oum government. In his reply, the President plans to emphasize the necessity for unified action, pointing out sharply that we had abstained on the "colonial" vote in the UN at the Prime Minister's request for just this purpose.

The President then expressed the need for a detailed reconnaissance scheme to find out the exact nature of the military operations being conducted in northwest Laos. The aerial reconnaissance capabilities which were mentioned by the various members present included some C–46s as part of the CAT airline, some T–33s belonging to the Thais, which might be available tomorrow, and some U–2s presently located at Subic Bay. General Lemnitzer mentioned that the *Lexington* has a reconnaissance capability which could be exercised without overflight of North Viet-Nam. He pointed out that our best results thus far have come from the attaché plane which is accredited to the Laotian government, although it had been hit by gunfire a couple of days ago. This plane had actually secured pictures of the Soviets airdropping supplies. The President remarked humorously that for the first time in 50 years he had discovered the usefulness of an attaché. After some discussion, the President authorized the use of Thai aircraft

[5] Brown raised this as a possible step by the Boun Oum government in telegram 1214 from Vientiane, December 31. (Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3160; included in the microfiche supplement)

[6] Macmillan's December 30 letter to Eisenhower and Eisenhower's December 31 reply are in Eisenhower Library, Whitman File, International File, Macmillan, and Department of State, Central Files, 751J.00/12–3160, respectively; both included in the microfiche supplement. Macmillan's letter is also printed in *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956–1971*, p. 717.

and CAT aircraft for close-in tactical, visual and photo reconnaissance. He stated no objection to strategic reconnaissance but withheld permission for overflights of China.

General Lemnitzer then mentioned the necessity to stop the Russian airlift. The position of the Pathet Lao units is such that they can exist only on aerial resupply. Again the Thais possess a primitive type of fighter airplane called the T–6 which can be equipped with armament. It has a capability probably of shooting down an IL–14. The main difficulty is that the Laotian pilots are not yet trained and will not be for some weeks. [*2 lines of source text not declassified*] Mr. Douglas also mentioned that four B–26s which are not USAF planes, but belong instead to Thailand, can probably be available within the next few days. The President authorized the utilization of these aircraft [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] as soon as possible.

Some discussion then transpired over our obligation to support Thailand in the event the Chinese retaliate, particularly in the light of the lack of diplomatic support we are receiving from our allies. Mr. Merchant pointed out that if Thai reconnaissance aircraft were shot down by Pathet Lao only, then we are merely helping a legitimate government in suppressing a rebellion. If shot down by Chinese, then we have indeed identified aggression. He visualized no problem on this matter. The President agreed and stressed once more the necessity to obtain identification of Viet-Minh or Chinese forces, so definite as to convince not only us but also our allies. General Lemnitzer pointed out that although personnel and equipment may not in themselves be identifiable, the fact of columns along the road just inside the Laos border will constitute evidence in itself.

The President then stressed the need for coordinated and decisive action. At this state of the game, since we are not in war, the State Department should chair our overall planning. Most important is to legitimatize Boun Oum and solidify our allies on our side. We should then see if we are faced with going into war. If war is necessary, we will do so with our allies or unilaterally, since we cannot sit by and see Laos go down without a fight.

Mr. Dulles pointed out the difficulties inherent in Souvanna's present location at Phnom Penh. Here he is under the influence of Sihanouk, which is not helpful to our cause. Mr. Merchant said there are conflicting reports regarding Souvanna's attitude; unfortunately, being rich, he is not subject to bribery. Mr. Parsons said the French have most influence with Souvanna, but are unwilling to induce him to leave the scene at this moment.

[*1 paragraph (5½ lines of source text) not declassified*]

General Goodpaster then pointed out our two more extreme courses of action, which consist of (1) sending in U.S. forces as in Lebanon, and of (2) putting on an air blockade. The President agreed

that these courses of action are available, but emphasized caution in that we are almost alone in recognizing Boun Oum. He admonished the group to remember the necessity for identifying what the people of Laos want. General Cabell said that the mass of people in Laos are inarticulate. Furthermore, opinion is splintered, with true Laotians comprising less than half the population. Since many people are tribesmen, there is no true voice of the masses.

The President then summarized the actions we should take at this time. They are (1) induce Souvanna Phouma to resign as Prime Minister and possibly induce him to depart for France; (2) induce Boun Oum to allow his government to be legitimatized by the Assembly; (3) consolidate our positions with the British and the French; (4) alert the SEATO Council to the dangers which exist while not requesting specific overt action at this time; (5) make such changes and redeployments of our own forces as to maximize their usefulness in the event they must intervene against the North Viet-Namese. (Here the President recognized that new deployment must be accepted, but was satisfied when General Lemnitzer pointed out that we have three attack carriers available in the Far East.)

At Mr. Merchant's suggestion, the President then authorized a serious approach to the Russians. He authorized Ambassador Thompson to tell Khrushchev that we view the situation with grave concern, that we are moving the positions of our forces to assure, if necessary, that the legitimate government will not be destroyed, and that in the event of major war we will not be caught napping. The President here half humorously suggested that perhaps we should begin to exercise our airborne alert.

As the meeting drew to a close, Mr. Dulles pointed out we had not discussed South Viet-Nam. Diem is undoubtedly very excited about this development. The President said he should think he would be. He authorized those present to tell the press that they had discussed the Laotian situation.

As the group left, the President reemphasized that we must not allow Laos to fall to the Communists, even if it involves war in which the U.S. acts with allies or unilaterally.

John S.D. Eisenhower

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